

## 1. Love as Covenant, Not Contract

Hos 2:21–22; Mk 10:6–9

### INTRODUCTION

Many years ago, after a violent storm destroyed a small coastal village, people returned to rebuild their homes. Among the ruins stood an old lighthouse, badly damaged yet still standing. When asked why it had not collapsed, an elderly builder explained: “The lighthouse survived because it was not built merely for fair weather. It was built to endure storms.”

Marriage is much like that lighthouse. It is not a fragile arrangement meant only for beautiful days. It is a covenant — a sacred promise rooted in God’s faithful love. In the first reading, God speaks tenderly to His people: “I will betroth you to me forever.” And in the Gospel, Jesus reminds us that husband and wife are no longer two, but one. Christian marriage is not simply a contract between two individuals; it is a covenant sustained by God Himself.

Yet all of us know how often human love falls short — through selfishness, impatience, wounded words, or failure to trust fully in God’s grace. Therefore, as we prepare to celebrate these sacred mysteries, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord for mercy and healing.

### PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you call husband and wife to love with faithful and enduring hearts: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, you remain steadfast even when human love grows weak: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you unite hearts in a covenant that no storm can destroy: **Lord, have mercy.**

### PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who is rich in mercy and faithful in love, forgive us our sins,  
heal every wound within us,  
strengthen us in holiness,  
and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

### COLLECT

O God,  
who reveal your faithful and everlasting love  
through the covenant of Christian marriage,  
pour out your grace upon N. and N.,  
that united in heart and steadfast in faith,  
they may remain one through every joy and trial of life.  
Teach all of us gathered here  
to reflect your enduring love in our relationships,  
so that our lives may become signs of your mercy and fidelity.

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 a small town devastated by an earthquake, rescue workers searched for survivors beneath collapsed buildings. After many hours they heard a faint voice. Deep under the rubble, a husband and wife were found alive, holding each other tightly in darkness. When asked later what kept them going, the wife answered simply: “We promised long ago that whatever happened, we would face it together.”

That is the heart of Christian marriage.

Today, many people speak of marriage as a contract — something based on conditions, convenience, or mutual benefit. Contracts last only as long as both parties are satisfied. But God speaks a different language. In the first reading from Hosea, God says: “I will betroth you to me forever.” Forever — not temporarily, not conditionally, not only while life is easy.

The prophet Hosea knew what wounded love looked like. His own marriage became a painful symbol of Israel’s unfaithfulness to God. Yet God did not respond with revenge or abandonment. Instead, He responded with faithful love. That is why Christian marriage is not merely a human arrangement; it reflects the very heart of God.

A young boy once asked his grandfather, who had been married for over sixty years, “How did you stay together so long?” The old man smiled and replied: “We came from a generation that repaired things instead of throwing them away.”

That wisdom is deeply needed today. Modern culture often teaches people to replace rather than repair, to walk away rather than persevere. But covenant love says: “Even when we are wounded, we will seek healing. Even when storms come, we will remain faithful.”

In the Gospel, Jesus takes us back to the beginning of creation itself: “The two shall become one flesh.” Notice that Jesus does not say they merely live beside one another. He says they become one. Marriage is not simply about sharing a house, a bank account, or responsibilities. It is the joining of lives, dreams, sufferings, hopes, and souls.

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; it is a

pilgrimage. And every pilgrimage encounters hills, deserts, fatigue, and uncertainty. There will be moments of misunderstanding, disappointment, and sacrifice. But covenant love chooses fidelity again and again.

One nurse who worked for many years in a hospice shared something remarkable. She said she had witnessed countless couples near the end of life. “No one,” she said, “ever held their spouse’s hand and said: ‘I’m glad we never sacrificed for each other.’ The deepest joy always belonged to those who had remained faithful through difficult years.”

That is because faithful love transforms people. It purifies selfishness. It deepens compassion. It teaches forgiveness. And above all, it reveals God.

Dear N. and N., today your marriage becomes a living sermon to the world. People will not only listen to your words; they will watch your lives. They will learn what love means by the way you speak to each other, forgive each other, protect each other, and remain beside each other in joy and sorrow.

A man once planted two trees close together in his garden. Over the years their roots became intertwined beneath the ground. During a violent storm, many trees fell — but those two remained standing. Later an expert explained: “They survived because beneath the surface they held each other up.” That is God’s dream for marriage.

Not two isolated lives standing side by side, but two hearts deeply rooted in God and in one another — strong enough to withstand storms because grace holds them together.

And when that happens, marriage becomes more than a human promise. It becomes a sign of heaven itself. Amen.

## PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Trusting in the faithful love of God, who calls husband and wife into an enduring covenant, let us now place our prayers before Him.

1. For the Church throughout the world, that she may continue to witness to God's faithful and merciful love in a wounded world, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For N. and N., that their marriage may remain rooted in prayer, strengthened in trials, and joyful in love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples who struggle through difficulties, misunderstandings, or loneliness, that God may renew their hope and deepen their commitment, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For families divided by hurt or conflict, that forgiveness and reconciliation may bring healing and peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all gathered here today, that we may become faithful witnesses of love, patience, and compassion in our own relationships, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,  
you never abandon those whom you bind together in love.  
Hear the prayers we offer today,  
and strengthen us with your grace,  
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, offered in thanksgiving for God's faithful covenant of 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 man and woman for one another,  
that their union might reflect your own faithful love.  
In the covenant of marriage  
you call husband and wife  
to walk together through every season of life,  
to strengthen one another in holiness,  
and to become a living sign of your enduring mercy.

Even amid the fragility of human weakness,  
your grace remains steadfast,  
teaching hearts to forgive, persevere, and hope.  
And so, with Angels and Saints,  
we proclaim your glory,  
as with one voice we acclaim:

### INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching,  
let us pray with confidence to the Father  
whose faithful love never fails.

## **NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE**

Dear brothers and sisters,  
let us humbly pray to the Lord for N. and N.,  
who now begin their life together in the covenant of marriage,  
that He who has joined them in holy love  
may sustain them by His grace all the days of their lives.

(Brief silence)

Holy Father, creator of all things  
and source of every true covenant,  
you have revealed your faithful love to the world  
through the union of husband and wife.  
Look kindly upon N. and N.,  
who today entrust their lives to one another before your altar.

Grant that their love may not remain fragile or shallow,  
but become steadfast and enduring,  
able to withstand every storm and trial.  
When joy fills their home,  
may they give you thanks with grateful hearts;  
when difficulties arise,  
may they remain united in patience, forgiveness, and trust.

Teach them to walk together and never apart,  
to protect one another in weakness,  
to encourage one another in faith,  
and to seek each day not their own good alone,  
but the good of the other.  
May their words bring healing, their fidelity bring security,  
and their home become a place of peace, welcome, and mercy.  
Bless them also with the gift of children,

that they may lovingly welcome new life,  
raise their children in wisdom and faith,  
and together become a family rooted deeply in your love.

May their hearts remain always united in Christ,  
so that, strengthened by the grace of this Eucharist,  
they may persevere in faithful love throughout all the years to come.  
And after sharing the joys and burdens of this earthly life,  
may they one day rejoice together in 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 the love of N. and N.,  
that their home may become a place of reconciliation,  
trust, and enduring 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.  
In Christ, God renews His covenant of faithful love with His people.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love becomes strongest not in perfect moments,  
but in faithful ones.

Today Christ has given Himself completely to us in the Eucharist.  
In the same way, Christian marriage is a daily gift of self —  
patient, forgiving, enduring, and life-giving.

The world may celebrate romance that fades with emotion,  
but God blesses love that remains faithful through every season.

May this Eucharist strengthen N. and N.  
to become for one another a living sign of God's covenant —  
a love that does not walk away when storms arise,  
but grows deeper through them.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of your love,  
we pray, O Lord,  
that N. and N., strengthened by this Eucharist,  
may remain united in faithful and generous love  
all the days of their lives.

Teach us all to persevere in compassion,  
forgiveness, and hope,  
so that our lives may reflect the covenant  
you have made with your people.

Through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord,  
who has united you in a covenant of faithful love,  
strengthen your hearts through every joy and sorrow.

May He bless your home with peace, patience, and enduring trust.

May your love become a light for others,  
standing firm through every storm  
and revealing the steadfast love of God to the world.

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 and enduring love.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A contract lasts while conditions remain favourable; a covenant  
remains faithful even through the storm.”

## 2. Marriage as a Vocation and Calling

Jer 1:4–8; Jn 15:16

**THEME: “Chosen and Called: Marriage as God’s Loving Vocation”**

*Marriage is not merely a human arrangement or romantic achievement; it is a divine calling. Just as God called Jeremiah before he understood himself, and just as Christ chose His disciples before they chose Him, so too husband and wife are chosen by God to become a living vocation of love, fidelity, and fruitfulness for the world.*

### INTRODUCTION

A famous violin maker once placed an unfinished violin in the hands of a young apprentice and asked, “What do you see?”

The boy replied, “A block of wood.”

The master smiled and said, “I see music that has not yet been born.”

That is how God looks at every vocation. When God called Jeremiah, others saw only a timid young man; God saw a prophet. When Jesus called His disciples, others saw ordinary fishermen; Jesus saw apostles who would change the world. And today, as this bride and groom stand before us, the world may see simply a couple in love — but God sees a sacred calling, a covenant through which His own love will become visible.

Yet every vocation requires grace. Sometimes we hesitate like Jeremiah; sometimes we love imperfectly, selfishly, or fearfully. Therefore, before celebrating these sacred mysteries, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord to strengthen us in the vocation to love.

### PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You call us by name and invite us into the vocation of love: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You remain faithful even when our love becomes weak or fearful: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You chose us to bear fruit that will last forever: **Lord, have mercy.**

### PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who calls His people to holiness and strengthens every vocation with grace, forgive us our sins, heal what is wounded within us, deepen us in faithful love, and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

### COLLECT

O God, who call man and woman into a covenant of faithful love and make their union a sign of Your enduring presence, pour out the grace of Your Spirit upon N. and N., that, chosen by You before this day began, they may remain steadfast in love, courageous in trials, and fruitful in goodness all the days of their 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 man once visited the ruins of an old cathedral destroyed during the war. Much of the building had collapsed, but one statue of Christ remained standing. The hands of the statue, however, had been broken off.

Years later, when the church was rebuilt, the people placed beneath the statue a simple inscription:

**“Christ has no hands now but ours.”**

That is the mystery of Christian marriage.

Today, God calls this husband and wife to become the hands of Christ for one another. Through their tenderness, Christ will comfort. Through their forgiveness, Christ will heal. Through their sacrifices, Christ will love.

The readings today speak profoundly about vocation — about being chosen.

In the First Reading, Jeremiah hears astonishing words:

**“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.”**

Jeremiah feels inadequate. He protests:

“I am too young.”

In other words:

“I am not ready.”

Every vocation begins there.

A teacher once asked a little girl, “What do you want to be when you grow up?”

She answered, “I want to be brave.”

That may be the most beautiful answer ever given. Because every true vocation requires courage.

Marriage is not sustained merely by emotions. Emotions rise and fall like waves. Marriage survives because two people decide, again and again, to answer God’s call with courage.

There will be days of laughter and days of silence.

Days when love feels effortless and days when it feels costly.

But vocation means remaining faithful not only when the music is beautiful, but also when the instrument must be repaired.

In the Gospel Jesus says:

**“You did not choose me; I chose you.”**

What extraordinary words.

Long before they chose each other, Christ chose them both.

Their meeting was not an accident hidden inside random history. God was already at work.

A farmer once planted two tiny trees close beside one another. Years later, storms came. One tree standing alone nearby was uprooted. But the two planted together survived because beneath the ground their roots had become intertwined.

That is marriage.

The deepest strength of marriage is often invisible. It is built quietly:  
through daily patience,  
through listening,  
through prayer,  
through carrying burdens together,  
through choosing each other again after disappointment.

And Jesus says something more:

**“I appointed you to go and bear fruit.”**

Fruitfulness is far more than success or achievement. A fruitful marriage becomes shelter for others. It creates hope around itself.

Sometimes the greatest fruit of a marriage is not wealth, status, or perfection — but the atmosphere it creates:

a home where people feel welcomed,  
children feel safe,  
the lonely feel remembered,  
and forgiveness is stronger than pride.

Years ago, an elderly couple were asked the secret of their sixty years together.

The old man answered quietly:

“We lived in a time when, if something broke, we repaired it instead of throwing it away.”

That is vocation.

The world often treats relationships as disposable. But Christian marriage says:

Love is worth repairing.

Promises are worth keeping.

People are worth fighting for.

And so today, N. and N., Christ calls you not simply to a wedding day, but to a lifelong mission:

to reveal that faithful love is still possible,  
that forgiveness is still stronger than failure,  
and that God still writes beautiful stories through ordinary people.

And remember this always:

A cathedral is not built in a day.

Stone upon stone,  
year upon year,  
sacrifice upon sacrifice —  
that is how beauty rises.

So too with marriage.

And perhaps one day, many years from now, people will look at your life together and quietly say:

“Through them, we understood a little better how God loves the world.” Amen.

## **PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

God calls His people into different vocations for the building up of His Kingdom. Trusting in His faithful love, let us bring before Him our prayers for the Church and for this newly married couple.

1. For the Church, that she may faithfully proclaim God’s call to holiness, marriage, priesthood, and service, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. For N. and N., that their marriage may become a living witness of faithful, courageous, and fruitful love, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Lord, hear our prayer.**
3. For married couples everywhere, especially those experiencing difficulties, that they may find healing, reconciliation, and renewed strength in Christ, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
4. For families, that homes may become places of peace, prayer, forgiveness, and joyful hospitality, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all gathered here, that we may respond generously to God's call in our own lives and become instruments of His love in the world, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,  
You never cease to call Your people into lives of love and holiness.  
Hear these prayers and strengthen us to remain faithful to the vocation You have entrusted to us.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

### **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Pray, brothers and sisters,  
that this sacrifice,  
offered in thanksgiving for God's call to love 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 and goodness  
You call man and woman into the covenant of marriage,  
so that their love may reflect  
the faithful and fruitful love of Christ for His Church.

You chose them before this day  
to walk together through joy and trial,  
to strengthen one another in faith,  
and to become a sign of hope in a wounded world.

In their mutual self-giving  
You reveal that love is not possession but vocation,  
not merely emotion but faithful commitment,  
not only for themselves but for the life of 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**

Jesus taught us that those whom He calls are never left alone,  
for God Himself becomes their Father.  
With confidence in that love, and united as one family in Christ,  
let us pray in the words our Saviour gave us:

### **NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE**

Dear brothers and sisters,  
let us humbly pray to the Lord for this bride and groom,  
who today begin their life together in the sacred covenant of  
Marriage,  
that He who has called them by name  
may sustain them always by His grace.

Holy Father,  
who from the beginning made man and woman  
to walk together in faithful love,  
look kindly upon N. and N.  
whom You have chosen and called  
to the vocation of Christian marriage.

Pour upon them the grace of the Holy Spirit,  
that they may never lose the courage to love faithfully,  
to forgive generously,  
and to remain steadfast in times of joy and trial.

May their home become a place of prayer and peace,  
where Christ is welcomed, the lonely find comfort,  
and all who enter discover the warmth of Your presence.

Grant that they may grow old together in mutual trust,  
bearing one another's burdens with patience and tenderness,  
and rejoicing always in the gift they are to each other.

Bless them with children, if it is Your will,  
that they may lovingly hand on the faith,  
and that their family may become a living sign  
of Your love for the world.

And after a lifetime of faithful love,  
bring them, together with all who love them,  
to the eternal wedding feast of Christ,  
who lives and reigns for ever and ever. 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 You place within this marriage become a shelter  
in times of storm and a light for all who enter their home.  
Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

This is Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God,  
who calls us not only to believe in His love but to remain in it.  
Happy are those who answer His invitation  
and are nourished by His life.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

### **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

Love becomes believable when it remains faithful.

Today Christ has nourished this bride and groom with His own life,  
because no human love can endure by human strength alone. The  
Lord who called them will continue walking beside them — in  
ordinary days, hidden sacrifices, unexpected joys, and difficult  
seasons.

A vocation is fulfilled not in one grand moment, but in thousands of  
quiet acts of love.

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Having shared at the table of Your Son,  
we pray, O Lord,  
that N. and N., strengthened by this holy sacrament,  
may remain faithful to the vocation You have entrusted to them,  
grow in mutual love and holiness,  
and become witnesses of Your enduring compassion in the world.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord who lovingly called you into this covenant strengthen you in every joy and trial. **Amen.**

May He deepen your love,  
make your home a place of peace and welcome,  
and help you remain faithful all the days of your 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 the faithfulness of your lives.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Marriage is not merely finding the right person;  
it is answering God's call to become the right person for one another,  
day after day, in faithful love.

## 3. Christ at the Centre of Marriage

**Col 3:12–17; Jn 15:1–11**

**Theme: “Remain in Christ, and Love Will Bear Fruit.”**

*A marriage centred on Christ becomes more than a human partnership: it becomes a living branch united to the Vine, drawing strength, forgiveness, tenderness, and enduring joy from Him. When Christ remains at the centre, love matures, survives every season, and becomes a blessing for the world.*

## INTRODUCTION

In the mountains of Europe there is an old custom among some shepherd families. When a young couple marries, they are given a small vine plant. The elderly farmer who hands it over usually says: “Do not merely water the vine; stay close to its roots.” Years later, some vines flourish with rich grapes, while others wither. The difference is rarely the weather. The difference is whether the roots remained alive.

Today's Gospel speaks of roots and branches. Jesus says: “*I am the vine; you are the branches. Remain in me.*” Marriage cannot survive on romance alone, nor on feelings alone, nor even on good intentions alone. A marriage bears lasting fruit only when husband and wife stay rooted in Christ.

And so, as N. and N. begin this sacred covenant, we first acknowledge that at times we have tried to live by our own strength rather than by God's grace. Let us turn to the Lord who alone can keep love alive, and ask Him for mercy and renewal.

## PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You are the true Vine who gives life to every branch:

**Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You teach us to love with compassion, patience, and

forgiveness: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You remain faithful even when human love grows weak:

**Lord, have mercy.**

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who calls us to remain in His love

and to bear fruit that will last,

forgive our failures,

strengthen our hearts in fidelity and peace,

and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

## COLLECT

Heavenly Father,

You have called N. and N.

to build their marriage upon Christ, the true Vine.

Teach them to remain always in Your love,

to clothe themselves with compassion, kindness, humility, patience,

and forgiveness,

and to bear fruit that will endure through every season of life.

May their home become a living witness

to the joy and peace that flow from 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

Many years ago, a violin maker in Italy spent months crafting a beautiful instrument for a young musician. The wood was rare, the workmanship extraordinary. But after a few years, the violin lost its richness of sound. Experts examined it and discovered the problem: the instrument had been kept too far from the right atmosphere. It had slowly dried out within.

A marriage can look beautiful from the outside and yet quietly dry out within when it loses its living connection with Christ.

That is why today's Gospel is so important. Jesus does not say merely, "*Believe in me.*" He says: "*Remain in me.*" Remain. Stay connected. Stay rooted. Stay close.

The world often tells couples that love survives through excitement, success, attraction, or compatibility. Jesus says something deeper: love survives through communion with Him.

Saint Paul in today's reading from Colossians gives us the texture of a Christ-centred marriage: *compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and above all love.* These are not automatic qualities. They are fruits that grow when two people remain attached to the Vine.

There is a story of an elderly couple celebrating their 60th anniversary. Someone asked the husband, "How did your marriage last so long?" The old man smiled and replied, "We came from a generation where, when something broke, we repaired it instead of replacing it." That is profoundly Christian.

Every marriage will eventually face misunderstandings, disappointments, moments of silence, and seasons of struggle.

The question is not whether storms will come. The question is: where are the roots?

When Christ is at the centre, prayer becomes stronger than pride. Forgiveness becomes stronger than anger. Commitment becomes stronger than emotion.

A priest once visited a family after a terrible financial collapse. Their business had failed. The house was nearly empty. Yet on the dining table stood a candle beside a crucifix. The husband said quietly, "Father, we lost many things, but we decided not to lose each other." That home, though materially poor, was spiritually rich because Christ remained there.

N. and N., today you are not simply promising to stay together. You are promising to remain together in Christ. That is the difference.

Pray together — especially when you do not feel like praying. Speak kindly — especially when tiredness makes it difficult. Forgive quickly — especially when pride asks you to wait. Protect your marriage from the slow poisons of indifference and neglect.

Branches do not struggle anxiously to produce fruit. They simply remain connected to the vine. Fruit comes naturally from communion.

One final story.

During a severe drought in Africa, villagers noticed that one tree in the middle of a barren landscape remained green while everything around it dried up. Later they discovered why: its roots had reached an underground river hidden deep beneath the earth.

People who passed by saw only the green leaves. They did not see the hidden source.

Years from now, people may look at your marriage and admire its peace, its joy, its endurance, its tenderness. What they may not see is the hidden source beneath it all: your life in Christ. Remain in Him. And your love will bear fruit that lasts. Amen.

## PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

United in Christ, the true Vine, let us pray to the Father for this newly married couple and for the needs of the whole Church and world.

1. For N. and N., that they may remain deeply rooted in Christ, growing daily in love, patience, forgiveness, and joy, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. For married couples everywhere, especially those facing difficulties, that God may heal wounds, renew fidelity, and strengthen their commitment, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
3. For families, that their homes may become places of prayer, peace, and compassion where Christ is always welcomed, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
4. For those who feel lonely, abandoned, or burdened by suffering, that they may discover the faithful love of God through the kindness of others, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
5. For all gathered here today, that we may remain united to Christ and bear lasting fruits of holiness and charity, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of love and fidelity,  
hear the prayers we place before You today.  
Keep us always united to Christ,  
so that our lives may bear fruit that will last.  
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Pray, brothers and sisters,  
that this sacrifice, offered for a marriage rooted in Christ  
and nourished by His 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 call man and woman into a covenant of life and grace,  
so that, united in Christ,  
they may become a sign of Your faithful love in the world.

In Your Son, the true Vine,  
You teach us that love bears lasting fruit  
only when hearts remain rooted in Him.  
Through compassion, patience, forgiveness, and peace,  
You shape married love into a living witness of the Gospel.

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 Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching,  
let us pray with confidence to the Father  
who keeps us united in Christ and in one another:

## **NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE**

Dear brothers and sisters,  
let us humbly pray to the Lord  
for these newly married spouses,  
who have come to the altar of Christ  
so that He may strengthen them with His blessing  
as they begin their life together in the Lord.

(Pause)

Holy Father,  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
You formed man and woman in Your image  
and blessed their union with the gift of love.  
Look with kindness upon N. and N.,  
who today entrust their marriage to Your grace.

May Christ, the true Vine,  
remain always at the centre of their home and their hearts.  
Keep them firmly rooted in Your love,  
so that in every joy and trial  
they may draw strength from Your presence.

Clothe them with compassion, kindness, humility, patience, and  
forgiveness.

When difficulties arise,  
teach them to seek reconciliation before resentment,

understanding before judgment,  
and faithful love before pride.

May their words bring peace,  
their hands serve one another with tenderness,  
and their home become a place of prayer, welcome, and joy.  
Let their marriage be a living witness  
that love endures when hearts remain united to Christ.

Bless them also with the gift of children,  
that they may lovingly welcome new life  
and raise their family in faith, wisdom, and charity.  
May their children one day learn from them  
the beauty of trusting in You and remaining in Your love.

And after a long and blessed life together on earth,  
grant that they may one day rejoice  
with all the saints in 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 that flows from Your heart strengthen the love of N.  
and N. and make their home a place of reconciliation, trust,  
and enduring joy.  
Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Behold the Lamb of God,  
behold Him who remains faithful through every season of life  
and calls us to remain in His love.  
Happy are those who draw their strength from Him  
and are invited to the supper of the Lamb.

### **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

Love grows beautiful not by avoiding difficulties,  
but by remaining faithful through them.  
Christ has nourished us today with His own life  
so that our hearts may not grow weary.  
As branches draw life from the vine, may N. and N.  
always draw strength from the Lord  
who remains with them in every season.

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Lord our God,  
through this holy Eucharist  
You have nourished us with the life of Christ, the true Vine.  
Grant that N. and N.,  
strengthened by this sacrament,  
may remain united in faith and love,  
bear fruits of goodness and peace,  
and become a blessing to all who enter their home.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless your marriage with steadfast faith, deep joy, and enduring love. **Amen.**

May Christ, the true Vine, keep you always united to Him and to one another, so that your lives may bear fruit that lasts. **Amen.**

May your home become a place of prayer, forgiveness, hospitality, and peace for all who enter it. **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 remaining in His love and bearing fruit that will last.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

A marriage remains strong not because life is easy, but because two hearts stay rooted in Christ, the true Vine.

## 4. The Wedding at Cana: Inviting Jesus into the Home Tobit 8,4-8; Jn 2,1-11

**Theme:** “When Jesus Is Invited In, Ordinary Water Becomes Extraordinary Wine.”

*The Wedding at Cana and the prayer of Tobit reveal a profound truth: a marriage flourishes not merely because two people love each other, but because they invite God into the very centre of their home. Christ does not remove every difficulty from married life, but He transforms what is ordinary, empty, or fragile into something abundant and life-giving.*

## INTRODUCTION

A journalist once interviewed an elderly couple who had been married for over sixty years. He asked them, “What kept your marriage strong for so long?”

The old woman smiled and said, “Every morning before breakfast, we lit a candle before a small crucifix in our kitchen. Some days we prayed beautifully. Some days we argued first and prayed later. But we never allowed Christ to leave the table.” Her husband added quietly, “Whenever love became thin, He filled it again.”

That is exactly what happens at Cana. The wine runs out. Joy begins to fade. Embarrassment enters the celebration. Yet the turning point of the story is simple: Jesus was there. Because He was welcomed into the wedding, lack became abundance, anxiety became joy, and ordinary water became the finest wine.

Today, as N. and N. begin their married life, they do not merely celebrate love; they invite Christ into their home, their joys, their fears, their future, and even their weaknesses. And because none of us has loved perfectly, let us now ask the Lord for mercy and grace as we begin these sacred mysteries.

## PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You entered the wedding feast at Cana and brought joy where there was emptiness: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You transform ordinary human love into a sacred covenant of grace: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You remain with us in every season of marriage — in abundance and in need: **Lord, have mercy.**

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God,  
who through His Son transforms weakness into grace  
and emptiness into overflowing joy,  
have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,  
and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

## COLLECT

Heavenly Father,  
in the Wedding Feast at Cana  
your Son revealed the beauty of love blessed by His presence.  
Pour out your grace upon N. and N.,  
that their home may always welcome Christ,  
their hearts remain faithful in times of joy and trial,  
and their love become a living sign of your abundant mercy.

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 village priest once visited a couple celebrating fifty years of marriage. Their house was small and worn. The furniture was old. The paint was fading. Yet there was warmth everywhere. Before leaving, the priest noticed something unusual hanging over the kitchen door. It was not a decoration but a simple wooden sign that read:

**“Christ is the unseen guest at every meal and the silent listener to every conversation.”**

The priest asked who had placed it there.

The husband smiled and said, “Many years ago, after a terrible argument, my wife pointed to that sign and whispered, ‘If Jesus is listening, perhaps we should speak differently.’ That sign saved our marriage more than once.”

That is the secret hidden inside today’s Gospel.

At Cana, the wine runs out. For a Jewish wedding feast, this was more than inconvenience; it was humiliation. The celebration was collapsing quietly from within. Yet no one notices except Mary. And Mary does what she has always done: she brings human need to Jesus.

The miracle begins not with power but with invitation.

The Gospel opens with these simple words:

**“Jesus and His disciples had also been invited to the wedding.”**

Everything changes because Christ was welcomed in.

Marriage today often begins with beautiful ceremonies, photographs, music, and dreams. But eventually every couple encounters moments when the “wine” seems to run low — patience runs low, tenderness runs low, strength runs low, hope runs low.

A young husband once admitted during counselling, “Father, we still love each other, but we stopped praying together.”

His wife quietly added, “We slowly built a house for ourselves but forgot to leave room for God.”

That sentence carries enormous truth. Many homes become architecturally impressive but spiritually empty.

Tobit and Sarah understood something essential. On their wedding night, before they touched each other, they turned first toward God in prayer. They knew marriage is not sustained by romance alone. Romance can begin a marriage; only grace can sustain it.

And Cana teaches us another beautiful truth: Jesus does not merely visit homes — He transforms them.

The servants filled ordinary stone jars with ordinary water. Yet in Christ’s hands, ordinary things become extraordinary. This is how Christian marriage works. God does not ask for perfection before He enters a marriage. He asks for openness. Bring Him the ordinary water of daily life — cooking meals, paying bills, forgiving offenses, caring for children, enduring sickness, beginning again after disappointment — and He can transform it into the wine of holiness.

There is also something moving about Mary’s words:

**“Do whatever He tells you.”**

That is perhaps the greatest advice ever given to a married couple.

Do whatever He tells you when life is easy.

Do whatever He tells you when life is painful.

Do whatever He tells you when misunderstandings arise.

Do whatever He tells you when sacrifice becomes difficult.

Because the miracle at Cana was never only about wine. It was about what happens when Christ becomes the centre of human love.

A nurse in a hospice once cared for a dying man whose wife never left his bedside. One evening the nurse asked her, “After all these years, what made your marriage last?”

The woman held her husband’s hand and answered, “Many times we carried each other. But every time we could no longer carry one another, Christ carried us both.” That is the miracle we pray for today.

Not a perfect marriage.

Not a life without tears.

But a marriage where Christ always remains welcome — at the table, in the conversation, in the silence, in the suffering, and in the joy.

Because when Jesus is invited in, ordinary water still becomes extraordinary wine.

## PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrating the love of N. and N., and trusting in Christ who blessed the wedding feast at Cana, let us bring our prayers before the Lord.

### 1. For the Church:

That she may continue to guide families and married couples to place Christ at the centre of their homes and relationships.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

### 2. For N. and N.:

That their marriage may always be strengthened by prayer, forgiveness, faithfulness, and the presence of Christ.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

### 3. For married couples everywhere:

That in moments when joy runs low and burdens grow heavy, they may rediscover the grace of God working within their covenant.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

### 4. For families experiencing division, loneliness, or hardship:

That the Lord who transformed water into wine may restore hope, peace, and love within their homes. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

### 5. For all gathered here today:

That we may become living witnesses that true joy is found wherever Christ is welcomed and obeyed. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of love and fidelity,

hear the prayers we place before you today.

May your Son remain always present in this marriage and in every Christian home.

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 presence of Christ who transforms human love with divine grace, 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 for one another, that their union might reflect your faithful love for your people.

At Cana your Son blessed married love by His presence and revealed that where He is welcomed, joy is renewed and hearts are transformed.

In Him, ordinary human love is lifted up by grace, homes become places of mercy and forgiveness, and families become signs of your presence in the world.

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

## **INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER**

At Cana, Christ transformed water into wine  
and revealed the abundance of God's love.  
Trusting in that same Fatherly care,  
let us now pray together in the words Jesus Himself taught us.

## **NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE**

Dear brothers and sisters,  
let us humbly pray to the Lord for N. and N.,  
who come today before God's altar,  
that He who has joined them in the covenant of Marriage  
may sustain them always by His loving grace.

(Pause)

Holy Father,  
who from the beginning made man and woman  
to live in faithful love and communion,  
look with kindness upon N. and N.,  
joined today in the sacrament of Matrimony.

May your Son Jesus Christ,  
who was welcomed at the wedding feast of Cana  
and transformed water into wine,  
remain always in the centre of their home.  
When joy grows faint, renew them with your grace;  
when burdens become heavy, strengthen them with your presence;  
and when weakness or misunderstanding enters their lives,  
teach them to return to one another with patience, forgiveness, and  
peace.

Grant that their home may always be a place of prayer,  
where faith is lived, hope is guarded,  
and love is offered generously each day.  
May they never close the door to Christ,  
the unseen guest at every meal  
and the silent listener to every conversation.

Bless them with the gift of children,  
that they may welcome new life with grateful hearts  
and raise their family in wisdom, faith, and love.  
May their children become a sign of your blessing  
and a joy to your Church and to the world.

And after a lifetime of mutual love and fidelity,  
may N. and N., together with all who have shared their lives,  
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.  
Strengthen also the peace of every family and every marriage, that  
homes may become places where forgiveness is stronger than  
anger and love stronger than fear.  
Who live and reign for ever and ever.  
**Amen.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,  
behold Him who transforms emptiness into abundance  
and remains the unseen guest in every faithful home.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus,  
You entered the wedding feast at Cana  
and brought joy where there was need.  
Remain now in the home of N. and N.  
Be present in their laughter and in their tears,  
in ordinary days and difficult seasons.

When love feels weak, renew it.  
When burdens grow heavy, strengthen them.  
And may their home always have room for You.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord our God,  
having shared at this holy table  
in the sacrament of your love,  
we pray that N. and N. may always remain united in heart and spirit.  
May Christ, who blessed the wedding at Cana,  
continue to dwell in their home,  
transforming daily life with His grace and peace.  
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless this marriage with enduring faith, patient love,  
and lasting joy. **Amen.**

May Christ, who revealed His glory at Cana, remain always at the  
centre of this home and transform every trial into grace. **Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit fill this family with peace, unity, and hope  
throughout all the days of their 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 welcoming Christ into your  
homes, your relationships, and your daily lives.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

A marriage does not become extraordinary because two people  
never run out of strength — it becomes extraordinary because they  
never stop inviting Christ into their weakness.

## 5. Love that Endures Through Trials

Rom 5:1–5; Mt 7:24–27

**Theme:** “Love that Endures Through the Storm”

*True Christian marriage is not the absence of trials, but the grace to remain standing through them. A marriage rooted in Christ becomes like a house built on rock: tested by rain, wind, and floods — yet unshaken because love is anchored in God.*

### INTRODUCTION

In 2010, after a devastating earthquake in Chile, rescuers found a small chapel standing almost untouched amid the ruins. Buildings around it had collapsed. Walls had crumbled. Roofs had fallen. But the chapel remained. Engineers later explained why: its foundation had been dug deeper than the others. What could not be seen above ground had saved everything above it.

That is exactly what today’s readings speak about. Saint Paul tells us that suffering can produce endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope — a hope that does not disappoint because God’s love has been poured into our hearts. And Jesus speaks of two houses: one built on rock and one on sand. Storms came to both. But only one remained standing.

Today, N. and N. are not celebrating a love that promises a storm-free life. They are promising to build deeply — on faith, forgiveness, sacrifice, prayer, and Christ himself. As we prepare to celebrate these sacred mysteries, let us acknowledge the times we have built on pride instead of trust, fear instead of faith, selfishness instead of love, and ask the Lord for mercy.

### PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you are the foundation that never fails:

**Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, you strengthen us when trials test our love:

**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you pour hope into hearts that remain faithful:

**Lord, have mercy.**

### PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,  
forgive us our sins,  
strengthen us when storms arise,  
root our lives more deeply in his love,  
and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

### COLLECT

Heavenly Father,  
you reveal your faithful love most powerfully  
when your children remain steadfast in times of trial.  
Pour out your grace upon N. and N.,  
that their marriage may be firmly founded on Christ,  
strengthened by patience, sustained by hope,  
and filled with the love that never fails.  
Teach them to stand together in every season of life,  
trusting always in your presence and 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 few years ago, a sailor who had crossed some of the roughest oceans in the world was asked what frightened him most at sea. People expected him to say hurricanes or giant waves. Instead, he answered: "A loose anchor."

He explained that storms are survivable — if the anchor holds. But when the anchor drifts, everything drifts with it.

Today Jesus speaks about exactly that. Two houses. Two builders. Two foundations. The storm came to both alike. Notice: Jesus never promises a storm-free life. Rain fell on both houses. Winds battered both homes. Floods struck both families. The difference was not the storm. The difference was the foundation.

Marriage is beautiful — but marriage is also real. There will be days of laughter and days of silence. Days when love feels effortless and days when love feels like work. There will be misunderstandings, exhaustion, financial worries, disappointments, sickness, and moments when life seems heavier than expected. Every marriage eventually meets wind and rain.

A woman celebrating fifty years of marriage was once asked, "What is the secret to lasting love?" She smiled and said, "We never fell out of love at the same time."

That is wisdom. Because enduring love is not sustained by emotion alone. It is sustained by decision, sacrifice, grace, and the willingness to remain when leaving would be easier.

Saint Paul tells us today that suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope. The world usually says the opposite: suffering destroys love. But Christian love can become deeper through suffering. Some couples

become stronger precisely because they walked through darkness together.

After World War II, a man returned home to Germany and found only rubble where his house once stood. Yet every evening he and his wife sat on the broken foundation stones and shared bread together. Someone asked why they kept coming back. The man replied, "Because the foundation is still here. We can rebuild."

That is Christian marriage. Sometimes circumstances collapse. Sometimes plans fail. Sometimes emotions weaken. But if the foundation remains — prayer, forgiveness, fidelity, Christ — then love can always rebuild.

N. and N., today you are not simply promising to stay together while life is easy. You are promising to remain faithful when life becomes difficult. The sacrament of marriage is not merely a contract of happiness; it is a covenant of perseverance.

Pray together — especially when you do not feel like praying.  
Speak kindly — especially when emotions are wounded.  
Forgive quickly — because resentment is slow poison.  
Protect your marriage — because what is precious is always attacked.

And never let pride become more important than love.

A carpenter once explained why old wooden bridges survive storms better than rigid concrete structures. He said, "Strong bridges know how to bend without breaking."

That too is wisdom for marriage. Humility bends. Pride breaks. Mercy bends. Ego breaks. Love bends — and survives.

And never forget this: the strongest part of a building is hidden. Foundations are underground. No one applauds them. No one

photographs them. Yet everything depends on them. The hidden things in marriage matter most: daily prayer, small acts of kindness, quiet sacrifices, honesty, fidelity, patience, and the decision every morning to love again.

In Japan, after a terrible tsunami, rescuers found a family photograph lodged inside the remains of a destroyed home. Across the picture someone had written these words: "Everything else can be rebuilt if we stay together."

That is the Gospel today. Storms may come. Life may shake. But a love built on Christ will stand. Because houses built on rock do not collapse easily — and marriages built on God do not face storms alone.

## **PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

My dear brothers and sisters,  
trusting in God who is our rock and our strength in every storm,  
let us place before him the prayers of the Church  
and of this newly married couple.

1. For the Church throughout the world:  
that she may continue to be a sign of hope and steadfast love for all  
families facing difficulties and trials. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For N. and N.:  
that their marriage may always be rooted in Christ, strengthened  
through prayer, and sustained through every season of life.  
**Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples experiencing hardship, illness,  
misunderstanding, or loneliness:

that God may renew their courage and help them rediscover the  
grace of faithful love. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For families affected by conflict, separation, war, or financial  
burdens:

that they may find support, healing, and people who walk beside  
them in compassion. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all gathered here today, and for our departed loved ones:  
that we may build our lives on the rock of Christ and one day rejoice  
together in the eternal kingdom. **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 steadfast in faith, hope, and love.  
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 steadfast love of N. and N.,  
and for the grace to remain faithful through every trial,  
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 through every season of life,  
bearing one another's burdens  
and strengthening one another in hope.

In Christ your Son,  
you revealed that faithful love is strongest  
when tested by sacrifice and perseverance.  
Through him you teach us  
that homes built upon the rock of faith  
will endure the storms of life.

Today you bless N. and N.  
and consecrate their covenant of love,  
that they may reflect your steadfast presence  
through patience, forgiveness, fidelity, and joy.

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 Saviour's command  
and formed by divine teaching,  
we dare to pray to the Father  
who strengthens his children in every storm  
and gathers all families into one love:

### **NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE**

Dear brothers and sisters,  
let us humbly pray to the Lord  
for N. and N.,  
who today have begun their life together in the covenant of Marriage,  
that He who is their sure foundation  
may strengthen them with His grace in every season of life.

*(Pause)*

Heavenly Father,  
you are the rock that never fails  
and the refuge of those who trust in you.  
Look with love upon N. and N.,  
united today in the sacrament of Matrimony.

May their marriage be firmly founded on Christ,  
so that when trials arise  
their hearts may not be overcome by fear,  
nor their love weakened by hardship.

When the winds of life grow strong,  
teach them to stand together in patience and trust.  
When disappointment or suffering enters their home,  
give them the grace to persevere in tenderness, forgiveness, and  
peace.

And when joy fills their days,  
may they receive it with grateful hearts  
and share it generously with others.

Grant that they may never drift far from you,  
but remain anchored in prayer,  
faithful in love,  
constant in sacrifice,  
and rich in mercy toward one another.

Bless them with the gift of children,  
that they may welcome new life with joy  
and raise their family in the light of faith, hope, and charity.  
May their home become a place of trust and compassion,  
where Christ is honoured,

the weak are strengthened,  
and love is renewed each day.

And after all the storms and seasons of this earthly life have passed,  
bring them together with all their loved ones  
to the eternal home of heaven,  
where every tear is wiped away  
and faithful love finds its perfect fulfilment.

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 the love of N. and N.,  
that amid every trial and uncertainty  
their hearts may remain united in your peace.  
Who live and reign for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Behold the Lamb of God,  
behold him who strengthens weary hearts  
and remains faithful through every storm of life.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

### **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

The strongest trees are not those protected from every wind,  
but those that grew through storms.  
Today Christ has nourished this couple with his own life and love.  
May the Eucharist become their daily strength —  
the quiet grace that teaches them to persevere,  
to forgive, to begin again, and to stand together  
when life becomes difficult.  
For love rooted in Christ does not merely survive;  
it becomes deeper, stronger, and more beautiful through time.

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray.

Lord our God,  
having shared at your table  
the Bread of life and the Cup of salvation,  
we ask you to strengthen N. and N.  
with the grace of enduring love.  
When trials arise, keep them steadfast;  
when burdens grow heavy, keep them united;  
and in every season of life  
let their hearts remain firmly rooted in Christ.

Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless this marriage  
so that N. and N. may remain faithful in joy and in sorrow,  
strong in trials, patient in difficulties,  
and constant in love.

May Christ, the sure foundation,  
keep their home secure in peace,  
their hearts anchored in hope,  
and their lives rich in mercy and forgiveness.

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 built upon the rock of Christ,  
and by a love that remains steadfast through every storm.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Storms do not destroy a marriage built on Christ; they reveal the  
strength of its foundation.”

## 6. Forgiveness as the Heart of Married Life

**Eph 4:31–32; Mt 18,21-35**

**Theme: “Love Lasts Where Forgiveness Lives.”**

*Marriage is not sustained by perfection but by mercy. The readings reveal  
that forgiveness is not a weakness in married life but its deepest strength.  
A couple who learns to forgive learns how to let love breathe again after  
hurt, misunderstanding, failure, and disappointment.*

## INTRODUCTION

In Japan there is an ancient art called *kintsugi*. When a precious  
bowl is broken, the artist does not throw it away. The cracks are  
carefully repaired with lacquer mixed with gold dust. The bowl  
becomes beautiful again — not because it was never broken, but  
because its brokenness was healed with gold. The cracks remain  
visible, yet they become part of its beauty.

Marriage is like that. No marriage is without cracks:  
misunderstandings, sharp words, forgotten promises, wounds  
caused knowingly or unknowingly. But the couples who last are not  
the couples who never hurt each other; they are the couples who  
learn to heal what has been broken. Forgiveness is the gold that  
holds love together.

Today Christ reminds us that mercy is not optional in love. “Be kind  
to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has  
forgiven you.” As we begin this sacred celebration, let us  
acknowledge the moments when we have withheld forgiveness,  
held onto pride, or failed in love, and ask the Lord for mercy and  
healing.

## PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You reconcile hearts wounded by sin and division:  
**Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You taught us to forgive not seven times but seventy-seven times: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You make broken love whole again through mercy and grace: **Lord, have mercy.**

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who heals wounded hearts,  
restores broken relationships,  
and teaches us the power of forgiveness,  
have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,  
and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

## COLLECT

Merciful Father,  
in your wisdom you have called N. and N.  
to the covenant of married life.  
Teach them to be patient in weakness,  
humble in misunderstanding, and generous in forgiveness,  
so that their love may reflect  
the faithful mercy of Christ toward his Church.  
Grant that all gathered here  
may also learn the healing power of reconciliation and peace.  
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 kept two jars on a shelf in his kitchen.  
In the first jar he placed a marble every time his wife disappointed him.

In the second jar he placed a marble every time she showed him kindness, patience, or love.

After one year, the first jar was nearly full.

But the second jar overflowed.

When a friend asked him which jar represented his marriage, the husband smiled and said, “The marriage I choose to remember is the second jar.”

That is forgiveness.

Not pretending wounds never happened.

Not denying pain.

But refusing to let hurt become the final memory.

In today’s Gospel, Peter asks Jesus, “How often must I forgive? Seven times?” Peter probably thought he was being generous. But Jesus explodes the limits of human calculation: “Not seven times — but seventy-seven times.”

In other words:

If you keep counting, you have not yet understood love.

The tragedy of many marriages is not that couples stop loving. It is that they begin keeping score.

“I apologized last time.”

“She always does this.”

“He never changes.”

“You hurt me ten years ago.”

Love dies where accounting begins.

Saint Paul tells us today: “Remove all bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and malice.” Those words destroy homes silently. Some marriages collapse not through one great betrayal but through thousands of tiny unforgiven wounds.

There is a story of an elderly couple married for over sixty years. Someone asked them the secret of their long marriage. The wife answered gently: “We were born in a time when if something broke, we repaired it instead of throwing it away.”

That sentence is almost prophetic today.

We repair phones.

We repair houses.

But many people no longer know how to repair hearts.

Forgiveness is not weakness. It is one of the hardest forms of love. It demands humility. Pride says, “Win the argument.” Love says, “Save the relationship.”

And forgiveness does not mean allowing abuse or pretending evil is acceptable. True forgiveness speaks truth honestly, but without hatred. It chooses healing over revenge.

There is another story told of Corrie ten Boom, who survived a Nazi concentration camp. After the war, one of the former guards approached her and asked forgiveness. She later admitted that every emotion inside her resisted. But she prayed silently and stretched out her hand. Years later she wrote: “Forgiveness is an

act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart.”

That is Christian forgiveness.

Not because the other deserves it.

But because Christ has forgiven us first.

N. and N., there will be days when romance feels effortless. And there will be days when forgiveness becomes the real language of your love.

Never go to bed feeding resentment.

Never weaponize each other’s weaknesses.

Never humiliate each other publicly.

And never let pride become more important than communion.

The happiest marriages are not those without wounds.

They are the marriages where mercy became greater than the wounds.

A priest once visited a dying man married for fifty-two years. The man held his wife’s trembling hand and whispered, “In all these years, we were both imperfect people loved by a perfect God.” That is the secret.

Marriage survives not because two perfect people found each other —  
but because two imperfect people keep choosing forgiveness.

And perhaps one day, after years of joys, tears, failures, reconciliations, laughter, and mercy, your love too will shine like *kintsugi* — beautiful not because nothing was ever broken, but because everything broken was healed with gold. Amen.

## PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

With confidence in the God whose mercy restores every wounded heart, let us present our prayers for this couple, for the Church, and for the world.

**1. For N. and N.,** that forgiveness may always have a home in their marriage, and that mercy may strengthen their love in difficult moments, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

**2. For married couples everywhere,** especially those experiencing hurt, distance, or misunderstanding, that God may heal and renew them, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

**3. For families divided by anger or past wounds,** that the grace of reconciliation may restore peace and unity, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

**4. For the Church,** that she may be a living witness of compassion, healing, and mercy in a wounded world, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

**5. For all who have died,** especially loved ones who supported N. and N. in life, that they may rejoice forever in God's eternal peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father,  
You never tire of forgiving and restoring us.  
Hear the prayers we place before You today,  
and make this marriage a living sign of Your faithful love.  
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 grace of reconciliation and mercy in married 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 loving wisdom  
you created man and woman for each other,  
so that through patience, tenderness, and forgiveness  
their love might reflect your own faithful mercy.

You teach us that love is strengthened not by pride but by  
reconciliation,  
not by keeping account of wrongs but by generosity of heart.  
And in Christ your Son,  
who forgave even from the Cross,  
you reveal the fullness of merciful love.

Through him the union of husband and wife  
becomes a sign of your enduring covenant with humanity.

And so, with Angels and Archangels,  
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 Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching,  
we dare to pray in the words that remind us  
that those who ask for forgiveness  
must also learn to forgive one another:

## **NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE**

Dear brothers and sisters,  
let us invoke the blessing of God upon this bride and groom,  
who have come before the Church to be joined in holy Matrimony,  
that he may sustain them with his grace  
and make their love fruitful in mercy and peace.

*(The couple kneel.)*

Holy Father,  
creator of all things,  
who fashioned man and woman in your image  
and made their union a sign of your faithful covenant,  
look graciously upon N. and N.,  
who today begin their life together in the Sacrament of Marriage.

Pour out upon them the abundance of your blessing.  
Grant that they may always remember  
that love is strengthened by forgiveness,  
healed by mercy,  
and renewed by reconciliation.

When misunderstandings arise,  
give them humility to seek peace.  
When they wound one another through weakness,  
teach them to forgive as Christ forgives.

Keep them from harshness, resentment, and pride,  
and let kindness, patience, and compassion  
have a lasting home within their hearts.

May they support one another in trials,  
share deeply in each other's joys,  
and become for one another  
a sign of comfort, strength, and faithful friendship.

Bless them with the gift of children,  
that they may welcome life with grateful hearts,  
raise their family in the light of the Gospel,  
and hand on to future generations  
the example of faith, mercy, and enduring love.

And after all the days of this earthly life,  
when they have walked together through joys and sorrows,  
may they come at last to the eternal banquet of heaven,  
where every tear is wiped away  
and love reaches its perfect fulfilment.  
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 heal wounds through forgiveness  
and to overcome division through mercy.  
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 hearts through mercy.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

Love becomes holy when mercy enters it.

Today Christ has given Himself completely to us in the Eucharist.  
In every marriage there will be moments when love feels easy and  
moments when it feels costly. But the Cross teaches us that love  
reaches its deepest beauty when it forgives.

A marriage rooted in mercy becomes a refuge in a wounded world.  
Where forgiveness lives, love never truly dies.

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Lord our God,  
who have nourished us at the table of your Son,  
grant that N. and N., strengthened by this Eucharist,  
may walk together in fidelity, patience,  
and forgiveness all the days of their life.  
When trials arise, may reconciliation restore them,  
and when joy abounds, may gratitude deepen their love.

Through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## **FINAL BLESSING**

May the Lord bless your marriage with patient love and merciful  
hearts.

**Amen.**

May He give you the grace to forgive quickly, speak kindly, and  
remain faithful in every season of life.

**Amen.**

May your home become a place of reconciliation, peace, laughter,  
and enduring love.

**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 loving generously, forgiving  
freely, and serving one another faithfully.

## **TAKE-HOME THOUGHT**

A strong marriage is not built by two people who never hurt each  
other, but by two people who never stop forgiving each other.

## 7. Communication in a Christian Marriage

James 1:19–25; Lk 6,43-45

**Theme:** “Words that Build a Home: Listening and Speaking with the Heart of Christ”

### INTRODUCTION

A journalist once asked an elderly couple who had been married for more than sixty years, “What is the secret of your long marriage?” The old woman smiled and replied, “We never stopped talking.” Her husband quickly added, “And we never stopped listening.” Then he pointed to an old wooden bench outside their house and said, “Whenever we were angry, we sat there until the words became softer and the hearts became warmer.” Their marriage survived not because they never hurt each other, but because they learned that words can either become walls or bridges.

Today’s readings remind us that Christian marriage is built not only with love felt in the heart, but with love spoken through the mouth. Saint James tells us to be “quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger,” while Jesus reminds us that “from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks.” A Christian home is shaped daily by conversations: apologies, encouragements, prayers, laughter, and even difficult truths spoken gently.

But all of us know that words can wound, silence can hurt, impatience can destroy trust, and anger can close hearts. Therefore, before we celebrate this sacred covenant, let us ask the Lord to purify our hearts, so that our words may reflect His mercy and truth. Let us now call to mind our sins.

### PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You teach us to listen before we speak and to love before we judge: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You heal the wounds caused by harsh words and broken communication: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You speak words of life, peace, and forgiveness to Your people: **Lord, have mercy.**

### PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May Almighty God soften every hardened heart,  
heal every careless word,  
forgive every silence that wounded love,  
and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

### COLLECT

Heavenly Father,  
You revealed Your love through the living Word, Jesus Christ.  
Teach us to listen with patience, to speak with kindness, and to build homes rooted in truth and mercy.  
May N. and N., united today in the sacrament of marriage, always reflect Your compassion in their words and actions, so that their home may become a place of peace, understanding, and enduring 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

Years ago, a shipwreck survivor was found alone on a tiny island.

Rescuers noticed three huts.

“What are those?” they asked.

The man replied, “The first is my house. The second is my church.”

“And the third?”

“That,” he said quietly, “is the church I used to go to.”

It sounds humorous, but it reveals something deeply human: relationships often break down not because people stop loving, but because people stop listening. Many homes do not collapse from one great tragedy. They slowly weaken through words spoken carelessly, silence carried stubbornly, and hearts that no longer try to understand each other.

That is why today’s readings are extraordinarily practical and deeply spiritual at the same time. Saint James says:

“Be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger.”

In only a few words, he gives one of the greatest foundations for a successful marriage.

Most people listen in order to answer. Very few listen in order to understand.

A counsellor once described a struggling couple who came for therapy. For almost an hour, each spouse spoke passionately about their frustrations. Finally, the counsellor asked the husband, “Can you repeat what your wife just said?”

He could not.

Then he asked the wife the same question. She could not either.

They had both spoken — but neither had truly listened.

Communication in Christian marriage is not simply exchanging information. It is the sacred art of revealing one’s heart safely to another person.

Jesus says in today’s Gospel:

“From the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks.”

The mouth is the window of the heart. Harsh words often come from hidden wounds. Gentle words usually come from healed hearts.

A grandfather once gave his grandson a tube of toothpaste and told him to squeeze it out completely. The boy did so easily. Then the grandfather said, “Now put it back.”

The boy laughed: “That’s impossible.”

The grandfather replied, “So are many words once they are spoken.”

That is why Christian communication requires discipline. Not every thought deserves to become a sentence. Not every irritation deserves an argument. Sometimes holiness in marriage means stopping one sentence before it becomes a wound.

But communication is not only about avoiding hurtful words. It is also about speaking life.

Many years ago, a teacher asked her students to write one positive thing about every classmate. Weeks later, one former student died tragically in military service. At the funeral, his parents found in his wallet the faded paper on which classmates had written kind words about him. One by one, other classmates admitted they too had kept their papers for years.

Why?

Because words of encouragement are never wasted. Loving words become shelters people carry in their hearts for a lifetime.

N. and N., your marriage will not be sustained merely by romance, but by daily communication filled with honesty, patience, forgiveness, prayer, and tenderness. There will be days when one of you is tired, disappointed, misunderstood, or afraid. In those moments, remember: the goal is not winning arguments, but protecting communion.

Pray together. Speak kindly. Never weaponize silence. Never allow pride to become louder than love.

A man married for fifty years was once asked, “In all those years, did you ever consider divorce?”

He smiled and answered, “Divorce? Never. Murder? Sometimes.” Everyone laughed. Then he added seriously, “But every difficult moment passed because we chose conversation over condemnation.”

And that is the Christian difference. Christ Himself is the Word made flesh. When He speaks, He heals. When He speaks, storms calm down. When He speaks, the dead rise. And today He asks this couple to let their marriage become an echo of His voice in the world.

One final story.

After an earthquake devastated a town, rescuers heard a faint voice beneath the rubble of a collapsed home. For hours they dug desperately until finally they found a little girl alive beside her mother’s body.

“How did you survive so long?” they asked.

The child answered, “My mother kept talking to me. She kept saying, ‘Don’t be afraid. I’m here.’”

At the deepest level, that is what every marriage promises: “In joy and sorrow, in success and failure, in youth and old age — don’t be afraid. I am here.”

And when two people continue saying those words with their lives, their marriage becomes not merely a contract between two hearts, but a living Gospel.

## **PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

Trusting in God, whose Word brings healing and unity, let us now present our prayers for this couple and for the whole Church.

1. For N. and N., that their words may always reflect patience, truth, tenderness, and forgiveness, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For married couples everywhere, especially those struggling with misunderstanding or silence, that Christ may restore communication and peace within their homes, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For families divided by anger, resentment, or painful words, that God may grant reconciliation and healing, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For the Church, that Christians may become witnesses of compassionate listening and respectful dialogue in a divided world, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all who have died, especially loved ones who taught us wisdom, kindness, and faith through their words and example, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of mercy,  
You speak words of life to Your people.  
Hear the prayers we place before You today, and teach us always to  
speak with love and listen with humility.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

### **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Pray, brothers and sisters,  
that these gifts, and the lives of this bride and groom  
who offer themselves to one another in love 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 You created humanity in love  
and taught us that words possess the power to bless,  
to heal, and to unite hearts.  
In Your wisdom You call husband and wife  
to reflect the tenderness of Christ,  
who speaks peace to His people  
and gathers them into communion.  
Today You bless N. and N.  
as they begin their married life together.  
May their home become a place where patience overcomes anger,  
where forgiveness triumphs over pride,  
and where loving words strengthen faith and hope.  
And so, with Angels and Saints, we proclaim Your glory,  
as with one voice we acclaim:

### **INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER**

At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching,  
let us pray with confidence to the Father  
who listens to every cry of the human heart:

### **NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE**

Dear brothers and sisters,  
let us humbly invoke the blessing of God upon this bride and groom,  
that He who has united them in the covenant of Marriage  
may sustain them with His grace throughout their lives.

*(Prayer with hands extended over the couple)*

Holy Father,  
who from the beginning ordained that man and woman  
should become one flesh  
and taught us through Christ  
that love is perfected in patience, mercy, and truth,  
look with favour upon N. and N.,  
joined today in the Sacrament of Marriage.

Pour forth upon them the grace of the Holy Spirit,  
so that they may always be quick to listen, slow to anger,  
and gentle in speech toward one another.  
May their words strengthen rather than wound,  
heal rather than divide,  
and bring peace to their home each day of their lives.

Grant that they may never allow pride, resentment, or silence  
to weaken the communion You have established today,  
but help them always to seek understanding,  
to forgive generously, and to speak with the heart of Christ.

May their home be filled with faith and prayer,  
with laughter in times of joy,  
comfort in times of sorrow,  
and steadfast hope in every trial.  
Let all who enter their home  
experience welcome, kindness, and peace.

Bless them also with the gift of children, if it is Your will,  
that they may lovingly accept the blessing of new life,  
raise their children in wisdom and holiness,  
and teach them by word and example  
to walk in the ways of the Gospel.

And after many years of faithful companionship,  
may they rejoice with the Saints  
at the eternal wedding banquet 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 use our words to heal rather than wound,  
to encourage rather than condemn,  
and to protect the unity of every family and home.  
Who live and reign for ever and ever.  
**Amen.**

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Behold the Lamb of God,  
behold Him who speaks words of eternal life  
and calls us into communion with Him and with one another.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

### **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

Love grows quietly through ordinary conversations.  
A home becomes holy not through perfection,  
but through daily acts of listening, understanding,  
forgiving, and encouraging.  
May this Eucharist strengthen N. and N.  
to speak words that give life, protect trust,  
and reveal Christ to one another every day of their marriage.

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Lord our God,  
having shared at Your table,  
we ask You to strengthen this newly married couple with the grace of  
this sacrament.  
May their words always reveal patience and truth, their listening  
reflect compassion, and their home become a witness to the peace  
of Christ.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless your hearts and your words,  
that you may always speak with kindness and listen with love.

**Amen.**

May He grant you patience in moments of misunderstanding,  
courage in moments of difficulty, and tenderness in every season of  
life.

**Amen.**

May your home become a place of peace, forgiveness, prayer, and  
joyful communion, where Christ Himself is always welcomed and  
heard.

**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 the love you speak, the patience  
you show, and the unity you build in your homes.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A strong marriage is not built by perfect people, but by two people  
who keep choosing to listen, forgive, and speak with love.”

Ephesians 5:21–33 John 15:9–12

## 8. The Grace of the Sacrament of Matrimony

**Eph 5,21-33; Jn 15,9-12**

**Theme:** “Marriage: A Sacrament Where Human Love Becomes a  
Living Sign of Christ’s Love.”

### INTRODUCTION

In a small village after a devastating flood, a young husband spent  
days rebuilding his damaged house. A neighbour asked him, “Why  
work so hard when another flood may come?” The man quietly  
replied, “Because my wife must know that every storm will find me  
building, not leaving.”

That is the difference between a contract and a covenant.

Contracts last only while conditions are good; covenants remain  
even when life becomes difficult. Today, in the Sacrament of  
Matrimony, human love is lifted by God’s grace into something  
sacred and enduring.

Saint Paul tells us that marriage reflects the mystery of Christ  
loving His Church. And Jesus says in the Gospel: “Remain in my  
love.” The sacrament celebrated today is not simply about two  
people promising to love each other; it is about Christ Himself  
entering their love so that His strength may sustain them when  
human strength alone is not enough.

But all of us know that love is sometimes wounded by selfishness,  
impatience, pride, and silence. As we gather around the altar  
where Christ renews His covenant with us, let us first ask pardon  
for the moments when we have failed to love as He loves, and  
pray that this marriage may always remain rooted in grace and  
mercy.

## PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You revealed the faithful love of the Father through Your gift upon the Cross: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You sanctify married love through the grace of the Sacrament of Matrimony: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You call us to remain in Your love and to love one another as You have loved us: **Lord, have mercy.**

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,  
heal the wounds caused by selfishness and fear,  
strengthen us in faithful love, and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

## COLLECT

O God, who reveal Your divine love  
through the sacred covenant of marriage,  
pour out the grace of Your Spirit upon this bride and groom,  
that united in Christ,  
they may become for one another  
a living sign of fidelity, sacrifice, and joy.  
Teach all of us gathered here  
to remain in the love of Your Son  
and to reflect His compassion in our daily lives.  
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 interviewed an elderly couple who had been married for over sixty years. He asked them the secret of their long marriage. The old woman smiled and pointed to a small crack in a porcelain cup on the table.

“We kept it,” she said, “because in our time, when something broke, we repaired it. Today people throw things away too quickly.” That single sentence contains the wisdom of Christian marriage.

Today’s world often treats love like a feeling that must always remain easy, exciting, and effortless. But the Sacrament of Matrimony proclaims something far deeper: love is not merely an emotion; it is a grace. Feelings rise and fall, but sacramental love is rooted in Christ Himself.

Saint Paul’s words in Ephesians are often misunderstood. At first hearing, some may focus only on the call for wives and husbands to relate to one another in certain ways. But the heart of the passage is not domination — it is sacrifice. Paul compares marriage to Christ loving the Church. And how did Christ love? Not by controlling, but by giving Himself completely.

Real love kneels before the beloved.

A priest once visited a hospital room where an elderly man sat beside his wife who no longer recognized him because of advanced dementia. The priest asked gently, “Why do you come every single day when she does not even know who you are?” The husband answered, “But I still know who she is.” That is sacramental love. Love that remembers its promise even when emotions, health, beauty, or circumstances change.

Jesus says in today's Gospel: "Remain in my love." He does not say, "Visit my love occasionally." He says remain. Stay. Abide. Persevere.

Marriage becomes holy not because the couple never struggles, but because Christ remains present within the struggle.

There will be days of laughter and days of tears. Days when communication flows easily and days of misunderstanding. Days of abundance and days of worry. But the sacrament means this: the grace of Christ will always be greater than the weakness of human hearts if they continue returning to Him.

A young couple once asked an old monk, "How do we keep love alive for a lifetime?"

The monk took them outside at night and pointed to a fire burning in the courtyard.

"Fire dies," he said, "when nobody feeds it."

Then he added quietly, "Prayer is the wood of marriage."

That is why couples who pray together discover strength beyond themselves. Grace enters ordinary moments — shared meals, forgiveness after arguments, caring during sickness, patience during stress, tenderness during exhaustion. Holiness is built quietly in daily fidelity.

And marriage is never only about the couple themselves. Every Christian marriage becomes a witness to the world. In a culture where promises are often temporary, faithful married love becomes a proclamation that God's love is permanent.

At the end of his life, a widower was asked what he missed most about his wife. People expected him to mention her cooking, her

smile, or her companionship. Instead, he said, "She made me become the man God wanted me to be."

That is the deepest purpose of marriage — not simply happiness, but holiness.

Today Christ blesses this couple not only with affection, but with sacramental grace — grace to forgive, grace to persevere, grace to begin again, grace to remain faithful, and grace to love as He loves.

And perhaps many years from now, after wrinkles, hardships, sacrifices, and countless ordinary days, their greatest achievement will not be wealth or success, but this: that through their marriage, two souls helped each other reach heaven. Amen.

## **PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

Celebrating the grace of Christ who sanctifies human love through the Sacrament of Matrimony, let us now bring our prayers before God our Father.

1. For the Church throughout the world, that she may continue to witness faithfully to the beauty and holiness of Christian marriage, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. For this bride and groom, that Christ may remain at the centre of their marriage and strengthen them in love, fidelity, patience, and joy, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
3. For married couples who are struggling through misunderstanding, illness, loneliness, or financial burdens, that God may renew their hope and deepen their love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

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

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

Father of love and mercy,  
receive these prayers offered in faith.  
Strengthen us through Your grace,  
that our lives may reflect the faithful love of Christ Your Son,  
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.  
**Amen.**

#### **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice,  
in which Christ renews His covenant of love  
and strengthens the grace of 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 and love  
You created man and woman for each other,  
that their union might reflect  
the faithful and fruitful love of Christ for His Church.

In the Sacrament of Matrimony  
You sanctify human affection with divine grace,  
so that husbands and wives  
may become signs of Your enduring covenant,  
supporting one another through joy and sorrow,  
strength and weakness,  
until they share together the fullness of eternal life.

And so, with Angels and Saints,  
we praise You, as without end we acclaim:  
**Holy, Holy, Holy Lord...**

#### **INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER**

At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, let us  
pray with confidence to the Father whose faithful love sustains  
every Christian home.

#### **NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE**

Dear brothers and sisters,  
let us humbly pray to the Lord for this bride and groom,  
who come today before God's altar  
at the beginning of their married life,  
that through the grace of the Sacrament  
Christ may strengthen and sustain their union.

Holy Father, creator of the whole world,  
who made man and woman in Your image  
and willed that their union be crowned with Your blessing,  
look with kindness upon this couple  
joined today in the covenant of marriage.

Pour out upon them the grace of the Holy Spirit,  
so that their love may never become shallow or self-seeking,  
but grow daily into the faithful and sacrificial love of Christ.

Teach them to remain with one another  
through every season of life —  
in moments of joy and celebration,  
in times of disappointment and struggle,  
in health and sickness, in abundance and uncertainty.

Grant that their home may become a place of peace,  
where prayer is never forgotten,  
where forgiveness is freely given,  
where wounds are healed with tenderness,  
and where Your presence is always welcomed.

Bless them with the wisdom to listen patiently,  
the humility to ask pardon quickly,  
the courage to carry one another's burdens,  
and the generosity to serve one another with joy.  
May they never allow pride, silence, or resentment  
to weaken the covenant they make today.

Bless them also with the gift of children,  
that they may lovingly welcome new life,  
raise their family in faith and compassion,  
and teach by word and example  
the beauty of faithful Christian love.

Lord Jesus,  
remain always at the centre of their marriage.  
When love becomes difficult, strengthen them with grace.  
When they are tired, renew them with hope.

When they fail, teach them to begin again.  
And when life blesses them with happiness,  
keep their hearts grateful and humble.

May they grow old together in fidelity and peace,  
becoming for the world  
a living sign of Your enduring love for the Church.  
And after sharing the joys and burdens of this earthly life,  
may they one day rejoice together  
in 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 especially this married couple,  
that their home may always be a place  
where reconciliation is stronger than anger  
and love stronger than fear.  
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 this Eucharist, Christ nourishes us with the same love He  
asks married couples to share faithfully each day.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love becomes holy when it learns to give more than it takes.  
Today Christ has entered this marriage  
not as a distant guest, but as its living foundation.  
May this couple always remember  
that the grace received at this altar  
is stronger than every trial they will ever face.  
For where Christ remains, love never stands alone.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at Your table, O Lord,  
we pray that this sacrament of unity and love  
may deepen the grace bestowed upon this married couple  
and strengthen all of us to remain faithful in love,  
generous in forgiveness, and steadfast in hope.  
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord Jesus,  
who sanctified married love at Cana in Galilee,  
bless this husband and wife  
and fill their home with peace and joy.

May He grant them the grace  
to remain faithful in times of trial,  
patient in moments of weakness,  
and joyful in the gift of one another.

And 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 love, steadfast  
commitment, and joyful service to one another.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

A successful Christian marriage is not one without wounds,  
struggles, or sacrifices — it is one where two people keep allowing  
the grace of Christ to teach them how to love again and again.

## 9. Faithfulness in an Age of Distraction

Heb 13,1-8; Mt 6,24-34

**Theme:** “Holding on to What Matters Most: Faithful Love in an Age of Distraction”

### INTRODUCTION

A man once visited an old monastery famous for making clocks. As he walked through the workshop, he noticed something strange: every clock was perfectly accurate, though none seemed modern or expensive. Finally, he asked the elderly monk, “What is your secret?” The monk smiled and replied, “Every hour, each clock listens again to the bell in the chapel. If it stops listening, it slowly loses the right time.”

That is also the danger of modern love. In a world filled with endless notifications, pressures, ambitions, screens, anxieties, and competing voices, marriages do not usually collapse in one dramatic moment. Often, they slowly drift because hearts stop listening — listening to God, listening to each other, listening to what truly matters.

Today, as N. and N. stand before God, the Lord reminds them through the Letter to the Hebrews: “Let marriage be held in honour,” and through the Gospel: “Do not worry about tomorrow.” Christ calls them to a love that is attentive, faithful, and rooted not in distraction but in trust. Yet all of us know how easily we become divided in heart. Therefore, before we celebrate these sacred mysteries, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord to gather our distracted hearts back to Him.

### PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You call us to love with undivided hearts and steadfast faithfulness: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You teach us not to serve the anxieties and distractions of this world, but to trust in the Father’s care: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You remain faithful to Your people forever and lead wandering hearts back to Your peace: **Lord, have mercy.**

### PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,  
forgive us the times we have allowed distractions,  
fears, and divided loyalties  
to weaken our love for Him and for one another,  
and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

### COLLECT

O God,  
who teach us that faithful love is stronger than fear  
and that hearts anchored in You shall never be shaken,  
look kindly upon your servants N. and N.,  
who today begin their married life before your altar.

Amid the noise and distractions of this passing world,  
keep them attentive to Your voice,  
steadfast in mutual love, patient in trials, and joyful in hope.

Grant that their home may become a place of peace, prayer, and enduring fidelity.

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 newspaper carried the story of a rescue operation after a terrible storm at sea. Among the survivors was an elderly sailor who had spent decades navigating dangerous waters.

Reporters asked him afterward, “How did you survive such violent waves?”

He answered quietly, “In storms, inexperienced sailors stare at the waves. Experienced sailors keep their eyes on the lighthouse.”

That may be one of the greatest lessons for marriage.

In our age, there are more distractions than ever before. Phones vibrate constantly. Schedules overflow. Careers compete for attention. Worries about money, success, appearance, and security pull hearts in a thousand directions. Couples may sit in the same room yet slowly drift into separate worlds.

And that is why today’s Gospel is so important. Jesus says:

“No one can serve two masters.”

And then He says something astonishing:

“Do not worry about tomorrow.”

Jesus is not saying responsibility does not matter. He is saying: *Do not let anxiety become your master*. Because whatever becomes your master will eventually shape your marriage.

Some couples spend their lives chasing bigger houses but forget to build a home. Some carefully charge their phones every night but forget to recharge their relationship. Some know every update on social media but no longer know the quiet worries inside the heart of the person beside them.

The Letter to the Hebrews gives us the antidote:

“Let mutual love continue.”

“Let marriage be held in honour.”

“Keep your lives free from the love of money.”

And then comes the great promise:

“I will never forsake you.”

That sentence is the foundation of Christian marriage. Every marriage survives not simply because two people hold onto each other, but because God holds onto them both.

There is an old story of a violin maker in Italy. A young apprentice once asked him, “How do you know when a violin is finally ready?” The master replied, “When every unnecessary tension has been removed, the instrument can finally sing.”

Many marriages suffer because of unnecessary tension — comparison, pride, unspoken resentment, endless busyness, silent distractions. But love begins to sing when two people learn simplicity: to pray together, to forgive quickly, to listen deeply, to laugh often, to protect time for one another.

N. and N., your marriage will not be strengthened primarily by grand vacations or expensive gifts. It will be strengthened by small daily fidelities: looking at each other instead of always looking at screens; choosing conversation over silence; praying together even when tired; remaining gentle during stressful seasons; protecting your love from the thousand little distractions that slowly erode intimacy.

And there will be storms. Every marriage has them. There will be days when work exhausts you, misunderstandings wound you, or worries about the future trouble your hearts. But remember the

Gospel today: the birds neither sow nor reap, yet the Father cares for them. Anxiety shrinks the heart. Trust enlarges it.

A married couple celebrating their 60th anniversary were once asked the secret of their enduring love. The wife smiled and said, “We lived in a time when if something broke, we repaired it instead of replacing it.”

That wisdom is desperately needed today. Relationships are often treated like disposable things. But Christian marriage says: “We will repair, forgive, begin again, and remain faithful.”

And that is exactly what Christ does with us. Again and again, He repairs what sin damages. He restores what distraction weakens. He gathers wandering hearts back to Himself.

So today, dear N. and N., keep your eyes on the lighthouse. Keep returning to Christ. Pray together. Protect your attention. Guard your tenderness. Choose each other every day.

Because in the end, a strong marriage is not built by people who never face distraction, fear, or storms. It is built by people who keep returning their hearts to what matters most.

And when you do, your marriage will become what every Christian marriage is meant to be: a quiet light in a distracted world — a living reminder that faithful love is still possible.

## PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Gathered around Christ, who calls us to faithful love and trusting hearts, let us bring before Him our prayers for the Church, the world, and especially for N. and N.

1. For the Church, that amid the distractions and anxieties of the world she may always keep her eyes fixed on Christ and lead people toward faithful and lasting love, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For N. and N., that their marriage may remain rooted in prayer, strengthened by trust, and protected from whatever weakens love and unity, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples everywhere, especially those struggling with distance, busyness, or wounded relationships, that God may renew their tenderness and fidelity, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For families burdened by financial worries, anxiety, or uncertainty about the future, that they may find peace in God’s providence and care, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For our departed loved ones and for all who taught us the meaning of faithful love by their example, that they may rejoice forever in God’s kingdom, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,

You never abandon those who trust in You.

Hear the prayers we place before You today

and keep us faithful amid the distractions of this world.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice,  
offered for a love that seeks to remain faithful  
amid the many distractions 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 for one another,  
that their covenant of love might become a sign of your own faithful  
presence in the world.

In times when hearts are divided by anxiety, distraction,  
and endless pursuit of passing things,  
you call husbands and wives to fix their eyes upon Christ,  
who remains the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Through the grace of this sacrament,  
you strengthen them to persevere in tenderness,  
to rebuild what is wounded, to trust in your providence,  
and to become for one another a refuge of peace and fidelity.

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 Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching,  
let us pray with trusting hearts to the Father  
who knows our needs before we ask Him:

## **NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE**

Let us pray to the Lord for N. and N.,  
who come to the altar on the day of their wedding,  
that through their union in Christ  
they may grow in faithful and enduring love.

Holy Father, who created man and woman in your image  
and blessed their union from the beginning,  
pour out your grace upon these your servants.

Keep their hearts attentive to one another  
amid the many distractions of this world.  
Grant that they may never allow anxiety,  
ambition, or selfishness to weaken the bond they share today.

May they listen patiently, forgive generously, pray faithfully,  
and always return to the love that first brought them together.

Bless their home with peace and joy.  
In times of trial, strengthen them.  
In moments of success, keep them humble and grateful.  
In every season, let them find security in your unfailing presence.

Grant also that they may be blessed with children,  
and become wise and loving parents  
who hand on the faith by word and example.

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.  
Keep also these newlyweds steadfast in love,  
calm amid life's anxieties,  
and faithful to one another in every season of life.  
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 distracted hearts find rest, fearful hearts find peace,  
and faithful love finds its strength.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

Love does not grow strong by accident.  
It grows every time two people choose attention over distraction,  
forgiveness over pride, trust over anxiety,  
and prayer over indifference.  
Today Christ has nourished N. and N. with His own life.  
May the One who remains forever faithful teach them,  
day after day, to remain faithful to one another.

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Having shared at this heavenly table, we humbly ask you, Lord,  
to strengthen N. and N. in the grace of their sacrament.  
When worries arise, grant them peace.  
When distractions multiply,  
gather their hearts back to one another and to You.  
And may the love they celebrate today  
grow ever deeper through the years.  
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 give you the wisdom to recognize what truly matters,  
the patience to endure difficult days,  
and the joy of always returning to one another with tenderness.  
  
May He bless your work, your family, your friendships, and your  
future children.  
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 of faithful love, steadfast  
trust, and undivided hearts.

## **TAKE-HOME THOUGHT**

“A faithful marriage is built whenever two people choose each other  
again and again amid all the distractions of life.”

## 10. Building a Home, Not Just a House

**Jos 24,14-15; Mt 7,24-27**

**Theme: “Building a Home that Can Withstand the Storms”**

*A house is made of bricks, wood, and walls; a home is built with trust, sacrifice, prayer, forgiveness, and fidelity to God. Joshua calls the couple to choose whom they will serve, while Jesus reminds them that only the home built on rock will endure the rains, floods, and winds of life. Christian marriage is not merely about living together under one roof, but about building together upon Christ, the foundation that never collapses.*

### INTRODUCTION

Many years ago, after a terrible earthquake, rescuers found two houses standing side by side. One had collapsed completely, while the other remained almost untouched. When experts examined them, they discovered something surprising: both houses looked beautiful from the outside, but only one had deep foundations hidden beneath the ground. What no one could see determined what could survive.

Today, dear friends, we gather not merely to celebrate the construction of a new “household,” but the beginning of a home whose hidden foundation will matter far more than appearances. Marriage will face sunny days and storms alike: moments of laughter, misunderstandings, disappointments, sacrifices, unexpected burdens, and also immense joy. The question is not whether storms will come, but whether love will stand when they do. And so, as this couple chooses today whom they will serve and upon whom they will build their future, let us first acknowledge the times we have built on pride instead of humility, on selfishness instead of love, on fear instead of trust in God. Let us ask the Lord for mercy and for the grace to build our lives upon the Rock who never fails.

### PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you are the Rock upon which every faithful home must stand: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, you teach us to build with love, forgiveness, and truth: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you remain faithful when storms shake our hearts and homes: **Lord, have mercy.**

### PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,  
forgive us the weak foundations we have laid through selfishness,  
impatience, and fear,  
strengthen us in faithful love, and bring us to everlasting life.  
**Amen.**

### COLLECT

Heavenly Father,  
you call your children to build their lives upon Christ,  
the eternal Rock.  
Pour out your grace upon N. and N.,  
that their marriage may become a home of prayer,  
trust, tenderness, and steadfast love.  
When storms arise, keep them faithful;  
when joys abound, keep them grateful;  
and in every season of life,  
teach them to choose you above all else.  
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 father once took his son to the ruins of an old lighthouse destroyed by a violent storm. Nearby stood another lighthouse, still strong after more than a century. The boy asked, “Why did one fall and the other survive?” The father answered, “Because one was built for calm weather; the other was built for storms.”

That is the heart of Christian marriage.

Today the world spends enormous energy preparing couples for the wedding day: flowers, photographs, music, clothes, receptions. But Jesus speaks today about preparing for something deeper — the storms that inevitably come after the wedding day. A marriage survives not because life becomes easy, but because love is built deeply.

Joshua stands before the people and says:  
“Choose today whom you will serve.”

Marriage is not sustained by emotions alone. Feelings rise and fall like tides. A lasting home is built by daily choices:  
choosing patience when tired,  
choosing forgiveness when hurt,  
choosing presence when distracted,  
choosing fidelity when tempted to withdraw,  
choosing God again and again.

A young couple once framed their wedding vows and hung them in their living room. Years later, after countless struggles — financial hardship, illness, sleepless nights with children, misunderstandings — visitors noticed the frame had become faded and cracked. The husband smiled and said, “The frame grew old, but the vows grew

stronger.” That is what storms can do when Christ is the foundation: they do not destroy love; they deepen it.

Jesus never promises a storm-free life. Notice carefully: both houses in the Gospel face rain, floods, and winds. The wise man is not spared the storm. The difference lies beneath the surface. One house stands because it is anchored to rock.

What is this rock for a Christian marriage?

The rock is prayer together when words between husband and wife become difficult.

The rock is forgiveness before resentment hardens.

The rock is choosing communion over ego.

The rock is remembering that marriage is not a contract of convenience but a covenant of sacrifice.

There is an old story about a village struck by severe flooding. After the waters receded, people discovered something extraordinary: the oldest tree in the village had survived while many younger trees had been uprooted. Why? Because the old tree’s roots had gone deepest over the years. Marriage becomes strong not by avoiding hardship but by sending roots deeper into God through hardship.

And dear N. and N., one day your children — if God blesses you with them — will learn what love means not from books, but from the way you speak to each other at the breakfast table, from the way you handle conflict, from whether they see prayer in your home, tenderness in suffering, and forgiveness after failure. Children do not merely grow inside a house; they grow inside the atmosphere of a marriage.

A home is not built in a single day. Brick by brick. Word by word.  
Gesture by gesture. Prayer by prayer.

So today, do not simply ask whether you love each other enough to marry. Ask whether you are willing to build — patiently, faithfully, prayerfully — for the rest of your lives.

And remember this: the strongest homes are not the homes without cracks, but the homes where Christ remains at the centre of every crack.

Years ago, a fire destroyed almost everything a family owned. Standing before the ashes, the mother whispered to her frightened children, “We still have each other, and we still have God — therefore we still have a home.” That is the Gospel today. A true home is never merely walls and roofs. A true home is wherever love remains rooted in God.

So build carefully. Build faithfully. Build deeply. Build upon the Rock.

## **PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

As this couple begins building their new home upon Christ the Rock, let us bring before God the prayers of the Church and of the whole world.

1. For the Church, that she may continue to strengthen marriages and families to remain faithful amid the storms of modern life, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For N. and N., that their home may be filled with prayer, tenderness, forgiveness, and enduring love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples facing struggles, disappointments, or division, that Christ may strengthen their foundations and renew their hope, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For families throughout the world, especially those burdened by poverty, war, or displacement, that they may find security, peace, and loving support, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For our departed loved ones who helped build homes of faith and sacrifice, that they may dwell forever in the eternal home of heaven, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,  
you are the foundation that never fails.  
Hear these prayers we place before you today,  
and strengthen all families in faith and love.  
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, offered for the strengthening of this new home built upon Christ the Rock, 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 call them to become one heart and one home. In Christian marriage you teach us

that faithful love is built not on passing emotions  
but upon the enduring foundation of Christ.

Through joys and hardships,  
through seasons of peace and storms of trial,  
you remain the strength of those who trust in you.  
By your grace, homes become schools of forgiveness,  
tables of welcome, sanctuaries of prayer,  
and signs of your faithful covenant with humanity.

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 Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, let us  
pray to the Father who gathers us into one family and teaches us to  
build our lives upon the Rock of his love.

### **NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE**

Dear brothers and sisters,  
let us humbly pray to the Lord for N. and N.,  
who today begin their married life together upon the foundation of  
Christ.

Holy Father, creator of love and source of every family,  
pour out your blessing upon this bride and groom.

Grant that their home may be a place of peace in troubled times,  
of forgiveness in moments of hurt,

of patience in times of strain,  
and of joy in every blessing received.

Teach them to remain faithful when storms arise,  
to seek one another with tenderness,  
and to turn always toward you,  
the Rock that never fails.

Bless their work and their rest,  
their dreams and their sacrifices.  
May they grow old together in mutual trust and gratitude.

And, according to your loving will,  
bless them with children,  
that they may lovingly welcome new life,  
raise their children in faith and wisdom,  
and build a family that reflects your love in the world.

We ask this 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 also the homes and families gathered here today,  
that love may endure through every storm and division may give  
way to reconciliation.

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

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,  
behold him who strengthens every faithful home  
and sustains all who build upon his love.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

A strong home is rarely built through extraordinary moments alone.  
It is built quietly:  
through daily kindness,  
through listening when tired,  
through forgiving when wounded,  
through praying when words fail,  
through remaining faithful when storms arise.

Today Christ has entered this marriage through the Eucharist.  
May this couple never forget that the same Lord  
who blesses them today will remain with them tomorrow —  
in ordinary days, difficult days, and joyful days alike.  
For homes rooted in Christ may bend in the storm,  
but they do not collapse.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord our God,  
who have nourished us at the table of your Son,  
strengthen this newly married couple in unity and love.  
May the grace received in this sacrament  
help them build a home founded on faith,  
sustained by hope, and filled with selfless charity.  
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless this couple with steadfast love and faithful hearts.

**Amen.**

May he strengthen their home against every storm and fill it with lasting peace.

**Amen.**

May he bless them with joy, generosity, and children raised in wisdom and faith.

**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 building homes rooted in faith,  
strengthened by love, and founded upon Christ the Rock.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A beautiful wedding lasts one day; a faithful home is built one choice at a time.”

## 11. Marriage as a Journey Toward Holiness

**Phil 3,12-14; Mt 5,48**

**Theme:** “Marriage: Walking Together Toward Holiness”

*Christian marriage is not merely about living together under one roof, but about journeying together toward the heart of God. St. Paul reminds us that holiness is not something already achieved but something we continually strive toward: “I press on toward the goal.” Jesus raises that journey to its highest calling: “Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Today, this couple begin not a finished love story, but a pilgrimage of grace — helping one another become saints.*

### INTRODUCTION

A traveller once asked an old monk, “How do I know I am getting closer to God?” The monk pointed toward a mountain path disappearing into the clouds and replied, “When the climb makes you kinder instead of prouder, you are nearing the summit.” Holiness is not measured by perfection without weakness, but by hearts that keep climbing despite weakness. Love matures not in comfort alone, but in the daily ascent of patience, forgiveness, sacrifice, and fidelity.

Today, N. and N. stand before God not because they have already arrived, but because they are willing to walk together. Marriage is not the union of two perfect people. It is the covenant of two pilgrims who promise never to stop helping each other rise after every fall, seek God after every distraction, and love after every disappointment. Their vocation is not simply happiness, but holiness.

As we begin this sacred celebration, let us acknowledge the moments when we have stopped pressing forward, when selfishness weakened love, and when fear prevented us from becoming the people God calls us to be. And so, with humble hearts, let us ask the Lord for mercy and peace.

### PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You call us to press forward toward the holiness for which we were created: **Lord, have mercy..**

Christ Jesus, You teach us that true love is patient, sacrificial, and faithful: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You never tire of lifting us when we fall along the journey of life: **Lord, have mercy.**

### PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,  
forgive us the times we resisted His call to holiness,  
strengthen us whenever we grow weary on the journey of love,  
heal what selfishness has wounded within us,  
and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

### COLLECT

O God, who call man and woman  
to walk together in faithful love  
and to encourage one another toward holiness,  
look kindly upon your servants N. and N.,  
who today consecrate their love before your altar.  
Grant that through patience in trials, joy in sacrifice,  
and perseverance in faith,  
they may grow daily in charity and become for one another  
a path that leads to 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

In the 1968 Olympic marathon in Mexico City, one runner entered the stadium long after the race had officially ended. His leg was badly injured. Blood stained his bandages. The crowd had already begun leaving. Yet when people saw him limping painfully toward the finish line, they stood in silence and then erupted into applause. Someone later asked him, “Why didn’t you quit?” He answered, “My country did not send me 5,000 miles to start the race. They sent me to finish it.” Marriage is exactly that kind of journey.

Many couples begin with excitement, celebration, and dreams. But the real beauty of marriage is not in starting well — it is in continuing faithfully. St. Paul says today, *“I do not consider that I have already attained it... but I press on.”* Holiness is not instant perfection. It is faithful perseverance.

Jesus raises the calling even higher: *“Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.”* At first, those words sound impossible. But Christian perfection does not mean never failing. It means learning to love like God loves — forgiving again, beginning again, remaining faithful again.

A husband once carved a small line on the wooden dining table every anniversary. After forty years, the table was covered with marks. His granddaughter asked, “Why didn’t you buy a new table?” He smiled and said, “Because the scratches are the story.” Marriage becomes holy not because it remains untouched, but because grace transforms every wound into wisdom.

N. and N., there will be moments when the road feels steep. There will be misunderstandings, exhaustion, seasons of silence, and days when love feels more like sacrifice than emotion. But holiness grows

precisely there. Saints are not people who never struggled; saints are people who kept choosing love in the struggle.

There is an old story of pilgrims climbing a mountain during winter. One pilgrim kept stopping to help others who had fallen behind. Another traveller warned him, “You will never reach the summit if you keep carrying other people.” But when they finally arrived, they discovered something surprising: the one who helped others arrived strongest, because carrying others had kept his own heart warm. That is marriage. You will reach heaven not by walking ahead of each other, but by carrying each other.

The world often defines marriage by feelings: “As long as it makes me happy.” But the Gospel defines marriage by transformation: “As long as it helps me become holy.” Happiness comes and goes like weather. Holiness shapes eternity.

One elderly couple was once asked the secret of their sixty years together. The wife answered softly, “We never fell out of love at the same time.” When one was weak, the other carried hope. When one doubted, the other believed. That is what grace does.

Today you are not promising a perfect future. You are promising faithful companionship on the road toward God. Every prayer prayed together, every apology sincerely offered, every sacrifice hidden from the world, every act of tenderness in difficult seasons — all these become steps toward holiness.

And one day, after years of walking together, may you stand before God not merely as husband and wife, but as two souls who helped each other become saints.

A guide leading climbers through dangerous mountains once said, “The summit is beautiful, but we are changed by the climb.” That is

the deepest truth about marriage. The destination matters, yes — but it is the daily climbing together, the daily choosing of love, forgiveness, faith, and sacrifice, that slowly transforms two ordinary people into a living reflection of God’s holiness.

### **PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

As pilgrims journeying toward the holiness to which God calls every human heart, let us now place before Him our prayers for the Church, the world, and especially for N. and N.

1. For the Church, that she may continue to guide families and married couples toward lives of holiness, fidelity, and compassionate love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For N. and N., that their marriage may become a path of grace where each helps the other grow in faith, perseverance, and holiness, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples who struggle through illness, disappointment, or loneliness, that they may find strength in Christ who walks beside them, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For parents and families, that homes may become schools of forgiveness, prayer, and selfless love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all of us gathered here, that we may continue pressing forward toward the holiness God desires for us, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, you never cease to lead your children toward eternal life. Hear these prayers we place before you today, and strengthen us to walk faithfully in love until we reach the fullness of joy in your kingdom. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, offered for those who begin today their shared journey toward holiness, and for all of us striving to grow in 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 and to strengthen one another on the journey toward holiness. In the covenant of marriage you reveal the mystery of your faithful love, teaching us that true greatness is found not in self-seeking, but in sacrifice, perseverance, and mercy.

Through Christ, husband and wife become companions in grace, helping one another rise after every fall and pressing forward toward the eternal kingdom. And so, with Angels and Archangels, and with all the saints who now rejoice in your presence, we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

## INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching,  
let us pray as God's children,  
trusting that the Father who guides us on the journey toward holiness  
will sustain N. and N. in faithful love all the days of their life.

## NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE

Let us 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  
and perseverance in love.

Holy Father,  
creator of all goodness,  
pour out the grace of your Holy Spirit upon these newly married  
spouses.

Grant that they may walk together in faith,  
encourage one another in moments of weakness,  
and rejoice together in times of blessing.

Teach them to seek holiness not only in great moments,  
but in daily acts of patience, forgiveness, generosity, and tenderness.  
May their home become a place of prayer, peace, and welcome.

Bless them with the gift of children,  
that they may lovingly raise them in wisdom, faith, and compassion,  
and so become a family that reflects your divine love.

And after the journey of this earthly life,  
bring them, together with all who love them,  
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 especially the love of N. and N., that amid all the  
changing seasons of life they may remain steadfast in charity and  
united in heart.

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.  
Happy are those who walk with Christ  
on the path that leads to eternal life.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Holiness is rarely formed in dramatic moments.  
It is shaped quietly — in daily forgiveness,  
ordinary sacrifices, patient listening, faithful prayer,  
and love that continues even when tired.  
Today Christ has nourished this couple with the Bread of Life  
so that their marriage may become  
not merely successful in the eyes of the world,  
but sacred in the eyes of God.  
The journey continues, but they do not walk alone.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at this holy table,  
we humbly ask you, Lord, to strengthen N. and N.  
with the grace of this sacrament,  
that throughout the pilgrimage of married life  
they may persevere in unity, grow in holiness,  
and become living witnesses of your faithful love.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

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

May He strengthen you in every trial, deepen your joy in every  
season, and lead you always closer to Himself through your  
marriage. **Amen.**

May your home become a place of peace, prayer, forgiveness, and  
holiness, and may your lives together bear lasting fruit in love.  
**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 holiness of your lives and by  
the faithfulness of your love.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A holy marriage is not the union of two perfect people,  
but the lifelong journey of two imperfect people  
who keep helping each other toward God.”

## 12. Learning to Love Like Christ

**1 Cor 13,1-13; Jn 13,34-35**

**Theme:** “Learning to Love Like Christ: A Love That Chooses,  
Serves, and Endures.”

### INTRODUCTION

A teacher once asked a group of children, “What is love?”  
One little boy answered, “Love is when my grandmother’s hands  
shake because of arthritis, but my grandfather still paints her  
fingernails for her.”

The room fell silent. Because suddenly love was no longer a feeling.  
It was tenderness. Patience. Presence. Love was someone choosing  
another person again and again, especially when life becomes  
difficult.

Today, in the Word of God, Saint Paul describes love not as romance  
alone, but as a way of living: patient, kind, forgiving, enduring. And  
Jesus raises love even higher when He says: “*Love one another as I  
have loved you.*” Not merely human love, but Christ-like love — a  
love that bends down to wash feet, carries crosses, and remains  
faithful to the very end.

As we gather around this altar, we also recognize that we do not  
always love this way. At times we have loved selfishly, spoken  
harshly, withheld forgiveness, or failed to reflect the tenderness of  
Christ. 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 loved us with a patient and faithful heart:

**Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You taught us that true love is shown in humble service: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You remain with Your people in mercy and covenant love: **Lord, have mercy.**

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God,  
who calls us to love as His Son has loved us,  
forgive our selfishness,  
heal whatever wounds divide our hearts,  
strengthen us in patience and fidelity,  
and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

## COLLECT

O God, who revealed the fullness of love  
through Your Son Jesus Christ, grant that these your servants,  
joined today in the covenant of Marriage,  
may learn each day to love  
with patience, kindness, humility, and fidelity.  
May their home become a living sign  
of Christ's love for His Church  
and a place where forgiveness, joy, and peace abound.  
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 hospice once spoke about a husband who came every single day to feed his wife who no longer recognized him because of Alzheimer's disease.

One day someone asked him, "Why do you still come every day when she doesn't even 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.

Not love as emotion alone.

Not love only when convenient.

But love as decision. Covenant. Faithfulness.

And that is exactly what today's readings are about.

Saint Paul, in that beautiful passage from First Corinthians, gives us perhaps the greatest description of love ever written. Yet notice something important: Paul never speaks about feelings. He speaks about actions.

Love is patient.

Love is kind.

Love is not jealous.

Love does not keep score.

Love bears all things.

In other words, love is not something you merely fall into. Love is something you grow into.

The world often says: "Find the perfect person."

But the Gospel says: "Become the right person."

The deepest marriages are not made by perfect compatibility but by daily conversion.

Jesus takes this even further in today's Gospel:  
"Love one another as I have loved you."

That changes everything.

Jesus did not merely say, "I love you."  
He washed feet.  
He forgave sinners.  
He stayed when others walked away.  
He carried the cross.

Real love always costs something.

There is a story about a young couple married only two years when the husband lost his job unexpectedly. Anxiety entered the home. Bills piled up. One evening he apologized to his wife saying, "I'm sorry I can't give you the life you deserve."  
She quietly took his hand and answered, "You are my life. We will build the rest together."

That is Christ-like love.  
Love that stays during uncertainty.  
Love that refuses to reduce marriage to success, beauty, health, or convenience.

Dear bride and groom, today you stand before the altar full of joy. But one day one of you will be tired, discouraged, sick, or wounded. One day forgiveness will be difficult. One day patience will feel costly. And on that day, your marriage will need more than romance. It will need grace.

That is why Christian marriage is not merely a contract. It is a sacrament. Christ Himself enters your love. He becomes the unseen third person in your home.

And remember this: the strongest words in today's reading are perhaps these:  
"Love never ends."

Beauty fades. Strength weakens. Emotions rise and fall. But love rooted in Christ matures into something eternal.

There is an old story of a sculptor working on a block of marble. Someone asked him, "How do you create something beautiful from stone?"  
The sculptor replied, "I simply remove everything that does not belong."

Marriage is much the same. Over the years, God slowly removes selfishness, pride, impatience, and fear — so that love may become more like Christ.

And perhaps that is the deepest meaning of today: marriage is not only about learning to live with another person. It is about learning to love like Jesus.

I end with a story.

After sixty years of marriage, an elderly woman was asked the secret of their lasting love. She answered, "We were born in a time when if something was broken, we fixed it — not threw it away."

That is the love Christ offers today.  
A love that repairs.  
A love that forgives.  
A love that remains.

May your marriage become exactly that kind of love:  
a living Gospel, a refuge for one another,  
and a witness to the world that Christ-like love is still possible. Amen.

## PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrating God's faithful love revealed in Christ, let us now offer our prayers for the Church, the world, and this newly married couple.

1. For the Church, that she may always reflect the patient, merciful, and enduring love of Christ to a wounded world, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. For all married couples, especially N. and N., that their love may grow stronger through prayer, forgiveness, sacrifice, and joy, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
3. For families experiencing division, loneliness, or hardship, that the Lord may heal hearts and restore peace and tenderness, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
4. For children throughout the world, especially those lacking love or protection, that they may find homes filled with compassion and security, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
5. For our departed loved ones and for all who taught us the meaning of faithful love by their example, that they may rejoice forever in God's eternal embrace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of mercy and love,  
hear the prayers we place before You today.  
Teach us to love not only in words but in truth and sacrifice,  
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 Christ-like love and for the covenant of this newly married 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 in Your wisdom and goodness  
You created man and woman in love  
and called them to become one heart and one spirit.  
In Christ Your Son,  
You revealed the fullness of love:  
a love that serves, forgives, sacrifices,  
and remains faithful forever.

Today You bless N. and N.,  
who begin their married life before Your altar.  
May their union reflect the love of Christ for His Church,  
so that through patience, kindness, and fidelity  
their home may become a sign of Your presence 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 Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching,  
let us pray to the Father  
who teaches us to love not only with words  
but with hearts transformed by grace.

## NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE

Let us pray to the Lord for this bride and groom,  
who come to the altar of God  
as they begin their married life in Christ.

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

Teach them to love as Christ loves:  
with patience in trials,  
gentleness in words,  
faithfulness in commitment,  
and generosity in service.

May they be quick to forgive,  
slow to anger,  
and constant in prayer.

May their home become a refuge of peace,  
a school of charity,  
and a witness of hope to all who enter it.

Bless them with the gift of children,  
that they may lovingly welcome new life,  
raise their children in faith and virtue,  
and rejoice together as a family united in Your love.

In times of joy, keep them grateful;  
in times of suffering, keep them close to one another;  
and after a long and blessed life together,  
bring them 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 build homes where patience overcomes anger,  
forgiveness heals wounds, and love reflects Your own faithful heart.  
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 Christ we see the perfect love that never fails,  
the love that gives itself completely for others.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love becomes believable when it becomes visible.

Today Christ has given Himself once more in the Eucharist —  
patiently, fully, completely.

The same Lord who feeds us from this altar  
now asks this newly married couple  
to become bread for one another:  
strengthening each other in weakness,  
forgiving in moments of failure,  
and remaining faithful through every season of life.

May their marriage become a quiet sermon to the world:  
that love rooted in Christ can endure, heal, and bring joy.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of Your Son,  
we pray, O Lord, that this newly married couple  
may be strengthened by the sacrament they have received.  
Teach them to love with generous hearts,  
to persevere in fidelity,  
and to reflect the self-giving love of Christ in their family life.  
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.  
May He teach you to love with patience and tenderness.  
May He strengthen you in times of trial  
and deepen your joy in times of peace.  
May your home be filled with prayer,  
laughter, forgiveness, and welcome.  
May you always see Christ in one another  
and remain faithful in love all the days of your life.  
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 as Christ has loved you.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Love is not proven by grand words, but by daily choices:  
patience instead of anger, forgiveness instead of pride,  
presence instead of indifference.  
To love like Christ is the vocation of every Christian marriage.”

## 13. Patience and Tenderness in Family Life

**Col 3:12–15; Lk 6:27–38**

### **Theme: “Love That Chooses Mercy Every Day”**

*Christian marriage is not sustained merely by romance or compatibility, but by the daily decision to clothe one another with compassion, patience, forgiveness, and tenderness. The love Jesus speaks of in the Gospel is not sentimental love; it is merciful love — the kind of love that remains gentle when tired, faithful when wounded, and kind when misunderstood. Today, this couple begins not simply a life together, but a lifelong vocation to become for one another a living sign of Christ’s patient and merciful love.*

## INTRODUCTION

There is an old story about a violin maker whose instruments were famous across Europe. A young apprentice once asked him, “What makes your violins sound so beautiful?” The old craftsman replied, “It is not the wood alone. It is the patience with which the wood is shaped. If you strike too hard, it cracks. If you neglect it, it warps. Only tenderness can make it sing.”

Marriage is much the same. A family does not become beautiful because life is perfect, but because love learns patience. Homes are not destroyed first by great betrayals, but often by little wounds left unattended: harsh words, cold silence, forgotten kindness. That is why Saint Paul tells us today: “Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.” And Jesus goes even further: “Love your enemies... forgive... give without counting the cost.” In marriage, sometimes the “enemy” is not the stranger outside the house, but the hurt carried silently within it.

As we begin this sacred celebration, we recognize the moments when we have failed to love tenderly, failed to forgive quickly, or

failed to show mercy generously. Let us therefore ask the Lord for pardon and peace as we prepare ourselves to celebrate these holy mysteries.

### **PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS**

Lord Jesus, You teach us to love with patience and tenderness even when it is difficult: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You forgive us again and again and call us to forgive one another from the heart: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You are the peace that heals wounded hearts and restores broken relationships: **Lord, have mercy.**

### **PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION**

May almighty God, who is rich in mercy and tender in compassion, forgive us our sins, heal whatever is wounded within us, teach us to love with patience and humility, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

### **COLLECT**

O God, who reveal Your presence wherever love is patient, merciful, and faithful,  
pour out the grace of Your Holy Spirit upon these Your servants, that united in the covenant of marriage,  
they may clothe their home with compassion, kindness, forgiveness, and peace.  
Teach them to reflect the tenderness of Christ in moments of joy and trial alike,  
so that their family may become a living witness to Your enduring 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 once spoke about a dying elderly couple she cared for in a hospital. The husband came every single day and sat beside his wife though she no longer recognized him because of dementia. One day the nurse asked him, “Why do you still come every day if she doesn’t even 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 deepest.

Not love that survives only while emotions are easy, but love that remembers its promise even when life becomes difficult. Today’s readings speak exactly about that kind of love.

Saint Paul tells us: “Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience.” Notice his words carefully. He does not say: “Feel compassionate occasionally.” He says: “Clothe yourselves.” In other words, mercy must become something you wear every day. Just as no one leaves home without clothing, no marriage survives long without tenderness.

The Gospel becomes even more demanding. Jesus says: “Love your enemies, do good to those who hurt you.” At first, those words seem impossible in the context of marriage. Yet every married couple eventually discovers a painful truth: sometimes the deepest wounds come not from strangers, but from the people we love most. A careless word spoken in anger can echo for years. Silence can become colder than shouting. Pride can turn a house into a battlefield.

There is another story about a couple married for over fifty years. One evening, their granddaughter asked them, "Did you ever think of divorce?" The grandmother laughed and answered, "Divorce? Never. Murder? A few times." Everyone laughed because behind the humour was honesty. Long marriages are not built because two perfect people found each other. They endure because two imperfect people keep choosing mercy.

And that is exactly what Jesus teaches today. Mercy is not weakness. Mercy is strength under control. Tenderness is not softness without courage. Tenderness is love disciplined by compassion.

In every marriage there will be days when patience runs thin. There will be misunderstandings, disappointments, financial worries, exhaustion, perhaps even tears. The temptation will be to keep score: "I gave more." "You hurt me first." "You never understand." But Jesus proposes another arithmetic: "Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and gifts will be given to you."

A marriage dies when generosity dies.  
A marriage heals when mercy returns.

There is a Japanese art called *kintsugi*. When a bowl breaks, the cracks are filled with gold rather than hidden. The repaired bowl becomes more beautiful because it was broken and restored. Christian marriage works the same way. The strongest couples are not those who never hurt one another; they are those who learn how to heal, apologize, forgive, and begin again.

Dear couple, today you are not promising a life without storms. You are promising that no storm will be faced alone. Your greatest gift to each other will not be wealth, success, or even romance. Your

greatest gift will be this: a heart that remains gentle when life becomes hard.

One day your children, your family, and the world around you will learn what love looks like not from your wedding photographs, but from the way you speak to each other when tired, from the way you forgive after arguments, from the tenderness with which you carry each other's burdens.

And perhaps many years from now, when age has changed your faces and time has weakened your bodies, the deepest truth of your marriage will still remain:

"I still know who you are."

And in that faithful remembering, the love of Christ Himself will become visible.

## **PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

Gathered in joy around this newly married couple, and trusting in the mercy and tenderness of God, let us place before Him the prayers of the Church and of the world.

### **1. For the Church:**

That the Church may always reflect the compassionate and forgiving love of Christ, teaching families to live in patience, tenderness, and peace. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

### **2. For this newly married couple:**

That they may clothe their marriage each day with kindness, humility, gentleness, and mercy, becoming a living sign of God's faithful love. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

### **3. For families experiencing conflict or division:**

That wounded relationships may find healing, forgiveness, and reconciliation through the grace of God. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

### **4. For parents and children everywhere:**

That homes may become places where love is spoken gently, forgiveness is offered freely, and faith is lived joyfully.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

### **5. For all gathered here:**

That we may learn from Christ to love without counting the cost and to show mercy in our daily lives. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father,

You know the hopes we carry and the love we seek to live.

Hear these prayers and strengthen us with Your grace,

that our lives may reflect the tenderness 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 of love and thanksgiving,

offered for this newly married couple

who seek to build their home upon patience,

mercy, and faithful tenderness,

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 have shown us that love reaches its fullness not in power or pride,

but in mercy, patience, forgiveness, and self-giving tenderness.

Today You bless this couple as they begin their married life together.

May their home become a place of peace,

where kindness is spoken generously,

where wounds are healed through forgiveness,

and where Your presence is recognized in daily acts of faithful 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 Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching,

we dare to say the prayer that teaches us forgiveness,

mercy, and the courage to love with tender hearts:

## **NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE**

Let us pray to the Lord for this bride and groom, who come to the altar at the beginning of their married life, that through the grace of this sacrament they may always remain united in love.

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 abundantly Your blessing upon these newlyweds.  
Grant that they may be patient in difficulty,  
gentle in speech,  
quick to forgive,  
and faithful in every season of life.

When joy fills their home, let them thank You with grateful hearts.  
When trials arise, let them hold one another with deeper tenderness.  
Teach them never to wound with bitterness,  
but always to heal with mercy.

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

May their home be a refuge of peace for all who enter it,  
and may their love grow stronger with the passing years.

And after a lifetime of faithful companionship,  
bring them with all the saints into 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, to heal wounds with  
tenderness, and to choose mercy over anger.

Who live and reign for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Behold the Lamb of God,  
behold Him who teaches us to forgive, to love generously,  
and to remain faithful in mercy.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

Love becomes holy not in grand moments alone,  
but in ordinary acts repeated faithfully:  
listening patiently, forgiving quickly,  
speaking gently and remaining present.

The Eucharist we have shared is Christ's own tender love  
poured out for us.

May this couple learn to become for one another  
what they have received today — mercy made visible.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at Your table, O Lord,  
in the sacrament of perfect love,  
we pray that this newly married couple  
may be strengthened by Your grace  
to live in lasting unity and peace.

Teach them to carry one another with patience,  
to heal one another through forgiveness,  
and to reflect in their home the gentle love of Christ.  
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless your marriage with patient hearts and gentle words. **Amen.**

May He strengthen you in times of trial, deepen your joy in times of peace, and keep you faithful in mercy all the days of your life.  
**Amen.**

May your home become a place of reconciliation, kindness, laughter, and enduring 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 loving one another with patience, tenderness, and mercy.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

A strong marriage is not built by never hurting one another, but by never giving up on mercy.

## 14. The Power of Daily Prayer Together

**Phil 4:4–9; Lk 11:1–13**

**Theme:** “A Family That Prays Together Learns to Love with the Heart of God.”

## INTRODUCTION

There is an old story about a couple married for more than sixty years. When their grandchildren asked them the secret of their marriage, the husband smiled and pointed to a worn-out chair near the window. Every evening, no matter how difficult the day had been, they sat there together for ten minutes in silence before God. Sometimes they prayed with words, sometimes with tears, sometimes with gratitude, and sometimes with nothing at all. “That chair,” he said, “saved our marriage many times, because before we spoke against each other, we first spoke to God together.”

Today, dear friends, we gather not simply to witness the union of two hearts, but to celebrate the beginning of a home that seeks God together. Saint Paul urges us in the first reading: “Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, make your requests known to God.” And in the Gospel, the disciples ask Jesus the most important question: “Lord, teach us to pray.” A marriage rooted in prayer does not become free from storms, but it learns where to anchor itself during them.

As we begin this sacred celebration, let us admit that many times we have tried to carry life without God, solve problems without prayer, and speak quickly without listening deeply. Let us ask the Lord for mercy, that He may teach us once again to pray with trusting hearts.

## PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You teach us to call God our Father and to trust Him in every need: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You are present wherever two or three gather in Your name: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You fill praying hearts with peace that the world cannot give: **Lord, have mercy.**

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May Almighty God have mercy on us,  
forgive us our sins,  
heal the divisions within our hearts and homes,  
teach us to seek Him first in every joy and struggle,  
and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

## COLLECT

O God,  
who revealed to us through Your Son  
that hearts united in prayer  
are strengthened by Your peace and guided by Your wisdom,  
look with kindness upon these your servants,  
who today begin their life together in the Sacrament of Marriage.  
Teach them to seek You each day,  
to trust You in moments of uncertainty,  
and to build their home upon faith, hope, 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.**

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## HOMILY

A journalist once interviewed an elderly man whose wife was suffering from severe memory loss. Every morning he visited her in the nursing home and fed her breakfast. The journalist asked him, “Does your wife know who you are?” The old man quietly replied, “No. She no longer remembers me.” The journalist was surprised and asked, “Then why do you still go every day?” The husband smiled gently and answered, “Because I still know who she is.”

That is love.  
And that is prayer.

Prayer is not merely asking God for things. Prayer is returning every day to the One who knows who we are, even when life becomes confusing, painful, or exhausting. In marriage, there will be days when emotions are strong and days when they are weak; days of laughter and days of silence. But when a husband and wife kneel together before God, they remember not only who God is — they remember who they are to each other.

In today’s Gospel, the disciples ask Jesus, “Lord, teach us to pray.” Notice: they did not ask Him how to preach, how to perform miracles, or how to lead crowds. They asked Him how to pray. Because they had discovered something profound: the strength of Jesus came from His communion with the Father.

A marriage without prayer can still have success, comfort, and appearances. But deep within, something slowly dries up. Many couples speak to everyone except each other; and sometimes they speak to each other but never speak to God together. Yet when couples pray together, something holy happens: pride softens, anger

loses its sharpness, wounds begin to heal, and gratitude quietly returns.

There is a touching story of a couple who were on the verge of divorce. Communication had broken down completely. One evening, the wife found an old wedding photo and began to cry. She told her husband, "We have forgotten how we began." That night, awkwardly and almost unwillingly, they held hands and prayed one Our Father together for the first time in years. The problems did not disappear overnight, but the wall between them cracked. Years later they would say, "The healing of our marriage began not with counselling, but with one trembling prayer."

Saint Paul today gives us the map for a joyful marriage: "Have no anxiety at all... pray... give thanks... and the peace of God will guard your hearts." Notice that peace is not promised after problems disappear. Peace comes while problems still exist, because God is present within them.

Dear bride and groom, your greatest achievement will not be the house you build, the money you save, or the success you achieve. Your greatest achievement will be becoming two people who help each other reach heaven.

Pray together when life is beautiful, so that gratitude may keep you humble.

Pray together when life becomes difficult, so that suffering may not divide you.

Pray together when you cannot find words, because sometimes silence before God is itself a prayer.

One day, many years from now, your hair may turn grey, your strength may weaken, and your faces may carry the marks of time.

But if you have prayed together faithfully, your souls will recognize each other deeply, peacefully, eternally.

A little girl once saw her parents kneeling beside their bed at night in prayer. She later said, "When I saw my parents praying together, I knew our home was safe." That is the power of daily prayer together.

It makes a house into a sanctuary, a marriage into a covenant, and ordinary love into something that quietly reflects heaven itself.

## **PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

Trusting in God our Father, who hears every prayer placed before Him with faith and love, let us now present our petitions for the Church, for this newly married couple, and for the whole world.

1. For the Church throughout the world, that she may always teach people to trust in the power of prayer and become a sign of God's peace among nations. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. For N. and N., that their home may always be rooted in prayer, strengthened in forgiveness, and filled with gratitude and joy. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
3. For married couples experiencing struggles, distance, or disappointment, that the Lord may heal wounded hearts and renew love within their families. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
4. For children and young people, that they may grow up in homes where faith is lived sincerely and where God's name is spoken with love. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
5. For our departed loved ones and for all who taught us the faith through their example and prayers, that they may rejoice forever in God's eternal kingdom. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,  
You know the needs hidden within every heart.  
Receive these prayers we place before You today,  
and teach us always to seek You with trust and perseverance.  
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 beginning of this marriage  
rooted in prayer and trust in 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 faithfulness and unity,  
and You have taught us through Your Son  
that homes built upon prayer  
become dwelling places of Your peace.

In moments of joy, You deepen gratitude;  
in moments of trial, You strengthen hope;  
and through daily prayer together  
You shape human love into a reflection of Your divine love.

Today You bless N. and N.,  
who begin their married life in Your presence.  
May their hearts always turn toward You,  
so that their home may shine with patience, mercy, and enduring joy.

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 listens to every trusting heart:

### **NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE**

Let us pray, dear brothers and sisters,  
for this newly married couple,  
that God may graciously bless their union.

Holy Father,  
creator of love and source of all peace,  
pour out the grace of Your Holy Spirit upon N. and N.,  
who today have joined their lives before Your altar.

Grant that they may remain faithful in love,  
constant in prayer, patient in suffering, and joyful in hope.  
May their home become a place of welcome, forgiveness, and faith.

Teach them to seek You together each day,  
so that in moments of happiness they may give thanks,  
and in moments of trial they may never lose courage.

Bless them with the gift of children,  
that they may lovingly nurture them in faith and wisdom,  
and may their family become a witness to Your presence in the  
world.

Grant that, after a long and blessed life together,  
they may come with all their loved ones  
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.

May the peace born from prayer dwell abundantly within every family  
and especially within the home begun today by N. and N.

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.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

### **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

Love grows slowly.  
Faith grows quietly.  
Prayer grows faithfully.

Today God has not promised this couple a life without burdens,  
but He has promised His presence within them.  
The hands that joined before this altar must also learn to fold  
together in prayer,  
for couples who pray together slowly discover  
that God is not merely part of their marriage — He is its foundation.

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Having shared at Your table, O Lord,  
we ask that this sacrament of unity and love  
may strengthen N. and N. in their married life.  
May they remain steadfast in prayer,  
faithful in love,  
and joyful in the hope that comes from You alone.  
Grant that their home may always reflect the peace of Christ  
and become a blessing to all who enter it.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless your marriage with enduring faith, steadfast hope, and selfless love.

**Amen.**

May He teach you to seek Him together in prayer, so that your home may always be filled with peace.

**Amen.**

May He bless you with children, with generous hearts to raise them in wisdom and faith, and with the joy of seeing love grow through the years.

**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 your life,  
your love, and your faithful prayer together.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Couples who speak to God together eventually learn how to speak to each other with greater love.”

## 15. Marriage in a Digital Age- Rom 12:1–2; Mt 5:13–16

**Theme:** “A Marriage That Glows in a Screen-Lit World”

*In a digital age filled with endless notifications, distractions, and virtual connections, Christian marriage is called to become a living light: real, faithful, attentive, and deeply human. The couple is invited not to conform to the patterns of a distracted world, but to be transformed by Christ so that their love may shine before others like a lamp in the darkness.*

## INTRODUCTION

A university professor once asked his students to put their phones on the table and keep them face down for one hour. Within minutes, many became restless. Some kept glancing nervously at the screen. One student later admitted, “I realized my phone was not just in my pocket; it was inside my mind.” We live in a world constantly connected, yet many hearts are becoming emotionally disconnected. Messages are instant, but listening is rare. We can speak to hundreds online and still fail to truly see the person beside us.

Today, however, we witness something beautiful and courageous. N. and N. stand before God and the Church to promise not a virtual love, not a temporary affection, but a real, patient, faithful covenant. Saint Paul urges them: “Do not conform yourselves to this age, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.” Jesus calls them to become “salt of the earth” and “light of the world.” Their marriage is meant to shine — not through perfection, but through authenticity, forgiveness, prayer, and steadfast love.

Yet all of us know how easily we become distracted, impatient, self-centred, and inattentive to God and to one another. Therefore, as we begin these sacred mysteries, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord to renew our hearts.

## PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You call us to love with sincerity and truth, yet we often hide behind appearances and distractions: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You are the light that shines in every darkness, yet we have sometimes failed to reflect Your light in our families and relationships: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You invite us to be transformed by Your grace, yet we often conform ourselves to the spirit of the world: **Lord, have mercy.**

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, free us from all that darkens the heart and weakens love, renew us by the light of His grace, and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

## COLLECT

O God,  
who have called Your children  
to shine as light in the midst of the world,  
look with kindness upon N. and N.,  
who today consecrate their love before Your altar.  
Renew them daily by the grace of Christ,  
that amidst the distractions and noise of this age  
they may remain faithful in love, steadfast in hope,  
and radiant in charity.  
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 lighthouse stands most beautifully not at noon, but during the storm.

When the sea is calm and the sky is clear, nobody notices the lighthouse. But when darkness falls, when waves rise, when sailors lose direction, that lonely tower suddenly becomes the difference between life and death. Its purpose is not to admire itself. Its purpose is to guide others safely home.

Dear N. and N., today Jesus says to you: “You are the light of the world.”

Not someday. Not after years of perfect marriage. Today.

And what a difficult age in which to shine. Never before have couples had so many ways to communicate — and yet so little real conversation. Many couples sleep beside each other while emotionally living on separate islands, each illuminated more by the glow of a screen than by the face of the beloved.

A married man once confessed that his wife said to him, “I don’t think your phone is the problem. I think I slowly stopped being more interesting to you than your notifications.” That sentence pierced him deeply. Technology itself is not evil. But anything that steals attention from love slowly weakens the soul.

Saint Paul therefore pleads: “Do not conform yourselves to this age.” Every age has its temptations. In another century it may have been war or famine. In this age, one of the great temptations is distraction — the inability to be fully present.

Love grows where attention lives.

The greatest gift you will give each other is not expensive vacations, impressive homes, or curated photographs online. The greatest gift is presence. To truly listen. To notice pain before words explain it. To pray together even when tired. To protect silence. To choose each other again and again.

There is an old story about an elderly couple married for over sixty years. Someone asked the wife, “What is the secret of your long marriage?” She smiled and said, “We came from a generation that repaired things instead of replacing them.” That wisdom is deeply Christian. Marriage is not disposable. Love matures not by avoiding wounds but by healing them together.

Jesus also calls you “salt of the earth.” Salt is small, hidden, unnoticed — yet without it food loses flavor. Holiness in marriage often looks ordinary: preparing meals, waiting patiently, forgiving quickly, turning off devices to make time for each other, praying before sleep, carrying burdens silently for the one you love. Heaven often enters homes quietly.

Your marriage will preach sermons no microphone can ever preach. Your children one day will not mainly remember your words; they will remember whether there was peace at home, tenderness at the table, prayer in moments of fear, forgiveness after arguments, and warmth in difficult times. They will learn love by watching you love.

And there will be storms. Every marriage has them. Misunderstandings. Exhaustion. Financial strain. Moments of loneliness. But remember this: darkness never defeats light by fighting it. Darkness only wins when the light goes out.

Keep the light burning.

Pray together. Speak truthfully. Protect your tenderness. Never allow sarcasm to replace kindness. Never let technology become more intimate with you than your spouse. And when you fail — because every couple sometimes fails — return quickly to mercy.

A traveller once described seeing a small candle burning in the window of a remote farmhouse during a winter storm. He said that tiny light gave him courage to continue walking through the night. Dear N. and N., may your marriage become such a light — a small but steady flame in a world growing cold, hurried, and distracted. And may people who encounter your love find hope, warmth, and the presence of Christ.

For the world does not need perfect couples.

The world needs luminous ones.

## **PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

Gathered in joy around this new marriage covenant, let us pray confidently to God the Father, asking Him to strengthen N. and N. so that their love may shine brightly before the world.

1. For the Church, that she may continue to be a light in a world searching for truth and authentic love, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For N. and N., that amidst the distractions of modern life they may always remain attentive to God and to one another, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples everywhere, especially those struggling with loneliness, misunderstanding, or division, that Christ may renew their love and peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For future children entrusted to this couple, that their home may become a place of prayer, warmth, wisdom, and joyful faith, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all gathered here, that our lives too may reflect the light of Christ in a world often overshadowed by anxiety and distraction, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of light and love, hear the prayers we place before You today. Bless this newly married couple and make their home a living witness of Your presence. Through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

### **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, offered with joy for N. and N., who desire to build their marriage upon the light of Christ and not upon the passing patterns of this 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 marriage is holy, a covenant strengthened by grace and destined to reflect Your faithful love before the world.

In this age of noise and distraction, You continue to call husbands and wives to become signs of light, fidelity, tenderness, and peace. Through the Sacrament of Matrimony, You bless N. and N. today, that their home may radiate hope, their words may strengthen one another, and their love may draw others closer to 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 Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, let us pray with confidence to the Father who calls us to live not as strangers behind screens, but as His beloved children united in love.

### **NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE**

Let us pray to the Lord for N. and N., who come to begin their married life at God's altar.

Holy Father, who created man and woman in Your image and blessed their union with the gift of love, pour out abundantly upon N. and N. the grace of Your Holy Spirit.

Grant that they may remain faithful to one another through all the changing seasons of life.

When the world becomes noisy and hurried,  
teach them to listen deeply to one another.  
When distractions arise,  
keep their hearts cantered on what is true and lasting.  
May their home be filled with prayer, kindness, patience, and joy.

Bless them with the gift of children,  
that they may lovingly welcome new life  
and raise their family in wisdom and faith.  
May their marriage become a light for others,  
a refuge in times of sorrow,  
and a living witness to 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.

Strengthen also the peace of this newly married couple,  
that their home may always be a place of reconciliation, attentive  
love, and quiet trust amid the noise of the world.

Who live and reign for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Behold the Lamb of God,  
behold Him who remains truly present  
and faithful in a world longing for real love.  
Happy are those who learn to recognize His light  
in the breaking of the bread, in daily forgiveness,  
and in the quiet gift of self to one another.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

### **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

Love survives not because life becomes easier,  
but because two people continue choosing each other every day.  
Christ has nourished us at this altar  
so that human love may be strengthened by divine love.  
May this Eucharist become the hidden light  
within the home of N. and N.,  
sustaining them through every joy and every storm.

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Having shared at the table of Your heavenly banquet,  
we humbly ask You, Lord,  
to strengthen N. and N.  
with the grace of this Sacrament.  
May the Body and Blood of Christ  
keep their love faithful, patient, and radiant,  
so that in a distracted world  
their marriage may always reflect the light of the Gospel.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May He make your home a place of peace and joy.

May He strengthen you to remain faithful in love, patient in trials, and steadfast in prayer.

May your marriage shine with the light of Christ before your family, your friends, and the world.

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 love you share and by the light you bring to the world.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“In a world full of screens, the brightest light is still a faithful and attentive love.”

## 16. The Meaning of “Two Shall Become One”

**Gen 2,18-24; Mk 10,2-12**

**Theme:** “Two Shall Become One: A Covenant Stronger Than Individual Dreams”

### INTRODUCTION

A sculptor was once asked how he created such beautiful statues from rough blocks of stone. He answered, “I do not create the figure. I simply remove everything that does not belong to it.” Marriage is something like that. Two people come together carrying dreams, habits, fears, wounds, and expectations. Over time, love removes pride, selfishness, and isolation, until what remains is no longer merely “two individuals,” but one shared life shaped by God.

Today’s readings bring us to the heart of marriage. In Genesis, God declares that it is not good for man to be alone, and so He creates companionship—not ownership, not competition, but communion. In the Gospel, Jesus raises marriage beyond a contract or convenience and reveals it as a sacred covenant where “the two become one flesh.” Marriage, then, is not simply living beside each other, but learning to live for each other.

Yet we also know how often selfishness divides hearts that were meant to unite. Pride builds walls where love was meant to build bridges. As we begin this sacred celebration, let us ask the Lord to remove from us whatever keeps us from true communion with God and with one another. And so, with humble hearts, let us enter into the Penitential Act.

## PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You created us for communion and taught us to live in faithful love: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You call husband and wife to become one heart and one spirit in You: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You heal division, selfishness, and hardness of heart with the grace of Your covenant love: **Lord, have mercy.**

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who created us for love and communion, forgive us for every sin that divides hearts, weakens fidelity, and prevents us from becoming one in Him, and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

## COLLECT

O God,  
who from the beginning made man and woman  
to become one heart and one flesh,  
look with kindness upon this couple  
who today place their covenant before Your altar.  
Teach them to remain united in love,  
faithful in trials, humble in forgiveness,  
and joyful in the gift of shared life,  
so that their marriage may become  
a living sign of Christ's unbreakable 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 little boy once asked his grandfather, "How did you and grandma stay married for sixty years?"

The old man smiled and answered, "We came from a generation that repaired things instead of replacing them."

That is the tragedy of our age. We repair phones, restore old houses, and preserve antique furniture—but relationships are often discarded at the first crack. Jesus speaks directly into that culture today when He says, "What God has joined together, let no one divide." Marriage is not held together by feelings alone. Feelings rise and fall like waves. Marriage survives because two people decide, again and again, that love is greater than comfort, sacrifice is greater than pride, and covenant is greater than convenience.

In Genesis, God says, "It is not good for man to be alone." That sentence is deeper than loneliness. God created the human heart not merely to exist, but to belong. Adam recognizes Eve not as a stranger but as "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." Marriage is the miracle where another person's joys become your joys, another person's wounds become your concern, and another person's future becomes your responsibility.

But becoming "one" is not automatic. It is holy work.

Two rivers merging do not remain unchanged. Each gives itself to something larger. In marriage, two stories become one story. Two wills learn cooperation. Two imperfect people slowly become a sanctuary where God dwells.

A husband once complained to a marriage counsellor: "My wife has changed."

The counsellor replied, “Of course she has. The question is: have you learned to love the person she is becoming?”

That is the challenge of every marriage. Love is not loving someone only when they are easy to love. Christ did not love us because we were perfect; He loved us into wholeness. Marriage becomes holy when husband and wife stop asking, “How can this person make me happy?” and begin asking, “How can I help this person become who God created them to be?”

Jesus speaks strongly about divorce today because He knows the human heart can grow hard. Hardness begins in small ways: unspoken resentment, wounded pride, refusal to forgive, silence where tenderness once lived. A marriage rarely collapses in a single day. It weakens when little acts of love disappear.

There is an old story of a couple celebrating their fiftieth anniversary. Someone asked the wife, “Did you ever think of divorce?” She answered, “Divorce? Never. Murder, perhaps—but never divorce.”

Everyone laughed because hidden inside the joke was a profound truth: lasting love is not the absence of struggle; it is the refusal to walk away. Every marriage will know storms. The question is whether the couple fights each other—or fights together against whatever threatens their unity.

And that unity is not merely emotional. It is spiritual. The deepest meaning of “two becoming one” is not that two people lose themselves, but that together they discover God’s presence in a new way. Marriage becomes a sacrament when ordinary acts become holy: cooking meals, caring during sickness, forgiving after

arguments, praying before sleep, holding hands in silence when words fail.

One day beauty fades. Strength weakens. Success comes and goes. But faithful love becomes radiant with time.

There is a story of an elderly husband feeding his wife in a nursing home because her hands trembled too much to hold a spoon. Someone asked him, “Does she still know who you are?” He smiled gently and said, “She may not know me anymore, but I still know who she is.”

That is covenant love. Love that remembers even when life becomes difficult. Love that stays. Love that reflects the heart of God Himself.

Dear couple, today you are not simply promising to stay together. You are promising to become one—to build one home, one faith, one future, one path to heaven. The world will offer many definitions of love, but only sacrificial love endures.

And one day, many years from now, people may forget the flowers, the music, and the celebration of this wedding day. But they will remember something far greater: whether your love made others believe that God is real.

Because the strongest marriages are not those where two perfect people found each other. They are the marriages where two imperfect people never stopped choosing each other.

## PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

United in prayer and trusting in God who calls two lives to become one in love, let us bring before Him our needs and the needs of the whole world.

- 1. For the Church:** that she may continue to proclaim the sacred dignity of marriage and support couples in living faithful and joyful covenant love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- 2. For this newly married couple:** that their love may grow deeper through prayer, forgiveness, sacrifice, and tenderness, and that they may always remain one in heart and spirit, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- 3. For married couples experiencing difficulties:** that God may soften hardened hearts, heal wounds, and renew unity where division has entered, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- 4. For families and children:** that homes may become places of peace, faith, and mutual care where Christ is welcomed and loved, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
- 5. For all gathered here:** that we may learn to love more faithfully, forgive more readily, and become instruments of unity in a divided world, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,  
You are the source of all faithful love.  
Hear the prayers we offer today  
and strengthen us in communion with You and with one another.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice,  
offered for a love that seeks to become one 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 man and woman  
to live no longer for themselves alone  
but for one another in faithful communion of life and love.  
In the covenant of marriage You reveal  
the mystery of Christ's enduring love for His Church,  
a love that remains steadfast in sacrifice,  
merciful in weakness,  
and joyful in fidelity.

Today You bless this couple  
as they begin their life as one heart and one home.  
May their union become a sign of Your presence in the world,  
their fidelity a witness to Your unchanging love,  
and their family a place where faith and charity flourish.

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 one family to the Father  
who calls us into unity and love.

## **NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE**

Let us pray to the Lord for this bride and groom,  
who come to begin their married life at the altar of God.

Holy Father,  
creator of all love and communion,  
pour out the grace of Your blessing upon this couple.  
May they remain united in mind and heart,  
faithful in promise, patient in trials,  
and generous in forgiveness.

Teach them to become truly one:  
one in faith, one in hope, and one in charity.  
May their home be filled with prayer, laughter, peace, and hospitality.  
Grant that they may comfort one another in sorrow,  
strengthen one another in weakness,  
and rejoice together in the blessings You provide.

Bless them with children,  
that they may lovingly welcome new life  
and raise their family in wisdom and holiness.

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 this couple always be instruments of reconciliation and  
tenderness within their home and among all they meet.  
Who live and reign for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Behold the Lamb of God,  
who gave Himself completely in love  
so that we might never walk alone.  
Happy are those who learn to become one  
through His sacrifice and mercy.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

Love becomes holy when it learns to remain.  
Today this couple has promised not merely affection, but fidelity;  
not merely romance, but communion.  
In receiving Christ together,  
they receive the One who alone can keep two hearts united  
through every season of life.  
May they always remember that when love is rooted in God,  
no sacrifice is wasted, no forgiveness is forgotten,  
and no act of tenderness is small.

## 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 this holy Sacrament.  
May they remain one in heart and faithful in covenant,  
supporting one another in joy and hardship alike,  
until their earthly journey leads them  
to the eternal banquet of heaven.  
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless your marriage with steadfast love and enduring  
peace. **Amen.**

May He teach you to remain one in heart through every joy and  
every trial. **Amen.**

May your home become a place of faith, forgiveness, hospitality, and  
hope for all who enter it. **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 the faithfulness of your love and  
by the unity of your lives.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Marriage is not the joining of two perfect lives, but the daily decision  
of two imperfect people to become one in love, forgiveness, and  
faith.”

## 17. Joy as a Christian Witness in Marriage

**Neh 8:10; Jn 15:9–11**

**Theme:** “The Joy of Christ: The Strength and Witness of Christian  
Marriage”

### INTRODUCTION

In a small village torn by poverty, a young couple was once asked  
the secret of their happy marriage. They smiled and pointed to the  
old wooden table in their tiny kitchen. “This table has heard our tears,  
our arguments, our prayers, and our laughter,” the husband said.  
“Every night, before sleeping, we sat here and thanked God for one  
thing.” Years later, when tragedy struck and they lost almost  
everything in a flood, neighbours were astonished that the couple still  
radiated peace. The wife quietly said, “The flood carried away our  
furniture, but it could not carry away our joy, because our joy was  
never in things; it was in Christ.”

Today’s readings speak precisely about that kind of joy. Nehemiah  
tells us: “*The joy of the Lord is your strength.*” Jesus, in the Gospel,  
speaks of remaining in His love so that His joy may remain in us and  
our joy may be complete. Christian marriage is not merely a contract  
of convenience or an emotional arrangement; it is a witness to the  
world that true joy is born when two people remain rooted in the love  
of Christ.

Yet we know that many times we seek joy in ourselves rather than in  
God. We allow selfishness, impatience, pride, and wounded words to  
weaken love. Therefore, as we begin this sacred celebration, let us  
acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord to renew in us the joy that  
comes from His mercy.

## PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You call husbands and wives to remain in Your love:  
**Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You fill faithful hearts with joy that no suffering can destroy: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You make Christian families signs of hope and light in the world: **Lord, have mercy.**

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who restores joy to wounded hearts, strengthen us in faithful love, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

## COLLECT

O God,  
who have revealed that the joy found in Your Son  
is the strength of every Christian home,  
look kindly upon Your servants  
who today enter the covenant of marriage.  
Grant that, remaining always in Your love,  
they may become a joyful witness of faith,  
a source of hope to others,  
and a living sign of Christ's presence 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 journalist once visited an elderly couple who had been married for over sixty years. Their house was simple, their bodies weak with age, yet their faces shone with unusual peace. The journalist finally asked, "In all these years, what kept your marriage alive?" The old man smiled gently and replied, "We stopped asking whether we were happy, and started asking whether we were loving." Then the wife added, "And strangely, when we focused on loving, joy came and stayed."

That is exactly what Jesus teaches in today's Gospel. He does not say, "Search for happiness." He says, "*Remain in my love.*" And then He promises: "*That my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.*" Joy is not something chased; it is something received when love is lived faithfully.

The world often confuses joy with excitement. Excitement fades when circumstances change. Joy remains even when life becomes difficult. A candle flickers when the wind blows, but a fire rooted deep within the hearth continues burning. Christian marriage is meant to be that hearth — a place where Christ keeps the fire alive.

There is a story of a violinist who played beautifully before a large audience. At the end, everyone stood and applauded wildly, but the violinist kept searching the balcony. Finally, he smiled only when he saw one old man nodding quietly. Someone asked him why that mattered so much. The violinist answered, "Because that man was my master." In marriage too, the applause of society is not what matters most. What matters is whether Christ, the Master of love, looks upon this union with joy.

Nehemiah tells the people, *“The joy of the Lord is your strength.”* Those words were spoken to people who had suffered exile, failure, and tears. Yet God reminded them that joy is not denial of suffering; joy is confidence that God remains faithful through suffering.

Every marriage will one day face moments of misunderstanding, sickness, financial burdens, disappointments, and fatigue. The strongest marriages are not those without wounds, but those where love becomes larger than the wounds.

A mother once asked her grandmother, “How did your generation manage to stay married so long?” The grandmother replied, “Because we were taught to repair things, not replace them.” That wisdom is deeply Christian. In marriage, forgiveness repairs what pride tries to destroy. Prayer repairs what anger weakens. Tenderness repairs what routine hardens.

Dear couple, today your love becomes more than personal affection; it becomes a Christian witness. Your joy will preach louder than sermons. People will watch how you speak to one another in difficult moments, how you carry each other’s burdens, how you pray together, how you forgive, and how you remain faithful. In a wounded world, joyful fidelity is evangelization.

And never forget this: joy grows when shared. A home filled with prayer, laughter, hospitality, kindness, and gratitude becomes a light for others. Children who grow in such a home learn that faith is not merely taught in church; it is lived around the family table.

Let me end with one final story.

After decades of marriage, an old husband sat beside his dying wife in the hospital. The nurse overheard him whisper repeatedly, “Thank you... thank you... thank you.” Curious, she later asked him why

those were his final words to her. He answered with tears in his eyes, “Because she made my life a place where God’s joy could live.”

That is the vocation of Christian marriage: to make room for the joy of Christ — a joy stronger than sorrow, deeper than emotion, and eternal in its promise. May this couple become exactly that kind of witness to the world.

## PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrating the joy of Christ made visible in Christian marriage, let us now bring our prayers before God, who fills faithful hearts with lasting love.

1. For the Church, that she may radiate the joy of the Gospel and support married couples in faithful and holy living, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. For this newly married couple, that they may always remain in the love of Christ and become a joyful witness of faith to all who know them, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
3. For married couples experiencing difficulties, loneliness, or brokenness, that God may restore peace, healing, and hope within their homes, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
4. For children and young people, that they may discover in Christian families examples of faithful love, prayer, and enduring joy, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
5. For all gathered here, that the joy of the Lord may strengthen us in times of struggle and make us witnesses of Christ’s love in the world, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,  
You are the source of all lasting joy and faithful love.  
Hear the prayers we offer today  
and strengthen us always in Your grace.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

### **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice,  
offered in thanksgiving for the joy of Christian love  
and God's faithful presence in 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 and love  
You have called man and woman  
to become one heart and one life in the covenant of marriage.  
You reveal through their union  
the faithful love of Christ for His Church  
and fill their home with the joy that comes from remaining in Your  
love.

In moments of celebration and in days of trial,  
You remain their strength and consolation,  
teaching them that true joy is not found in passing things  
but in lives rooted firmly in You.

Through this sacrament  
You make their love a sign of hope for the world,  
a witness that mercy is stronger than failure  
and faithfulness stronger than time.

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 fills every Christian home with the joy of His love.

### **NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE**

Let us pray, dearly beloved,  
for this husband and wife,  
who today begin their married life at the altar of the Lord.

Holy Father,  
creator of all love and source of lasting joy,  
pour out the grace of Your Holy Spirit upon these newlyweds.  
Grant that they may remain always in the love of Christ,  
patient in trials, faithful in commitment,  
gentle in speech, generous in forgiveness,  
and joyful in serving one another.

May their home become a place of prayer and welcome,  
where faith is lived sincerely  
and where all who enter may encounter peace.

Bless them with children,  
that they may lovingly nurture them in wisdom and grace,  
and together become a family rooted in Your truth.

In moments of sorrow, be their comfort;  
in moments of prosperity, keep them grateful;  
and in all things, let the joy of the Lord be their strength.  
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 You give strengthen this married couple in every trial  
and preserve within their home the joy that comes from Your  
presence.

Who live and reign for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Behold the Lamb of God,  
behold Him who remains with us in love  
and fills faithful hearts with lasting joy.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

### **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

Lord Jesus,  
You have entered this marriage with Your presence and grace.  
May this couple always remember  
that joy is not found in perfect circumstances  
but in hearts that remain united to You.  
Teach them to pray together,  
forgive quickly,  
laugh often,  
and love faithfully,  
so that their home may become a living witness  
of Your enduring love in the world.

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Having shared at Your table, O Lord,  
we pray that this couple,  
strengthened by the Body and Blood of Christ,  
may remain steadfast in love,  
joyful in hope,  
and faithful in all circumstances.  
May their marriage reveal to the world  
the beauty of Christian love rooted in Your grace.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May God the eternal Father  
keep you united in faithful love  
and fill your home with lasting joy.

**Amen.**

May the Son, who revealed His love through sacrifice,  
strengthen you in patience, forgiveness, and peace.

**Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit  
make your family a living witness of Christian hope and joy in the  
world.

**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 your lives,  
and may the joy of Christ  
shine through this marriage for many years to come.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Christian marriage becomes strongest not when life is easiest,  
but when two people continue choosing love, prayer,  
and joy in Christ every single day.”

## 18. The Holy Family as a Model for Couples

**Col 3:12–21; Lk 2:41–52**

**Theme:** “Building a Home Where Christ Is Never Lost”

The Holy Family of Nazareth reveals that holiness in marriage is not found in a perfect life, but in a home where love continually returns to God. In the Gospel, Mary and Joseph experience the fear of “losing” Jesus, only to rediscover Him at the centre of the Father’s house. Every Christian marriage faces moments of confusion, distance, silence, fatigue, and searching. Yet blessed are the couples who keep returning together to Christ.

Colossians gives the architecture of such a home: compassion, kindness, patience, forgiveness, gratitude, and above all love. A Christian family is not built merely by compatibility or romance, but by daily acts of grace. The Holy Family becomes not a distant ideal but a living pattern for every couple who desire that Christ remain at the centre of their relationship.

Today, as this couple begins their married life, the Church invites all of us to examine our own homes and hearts. Have we allowed pride, impatience, selfishness, or indifference to make us lose sight of Christ? Let us therefore ask the Lord for mercy and peace as we prepare to celebrate these sacred mysteries.

## PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You sanctified family life in the home of Nazareth and taught us the beauty of faithful love: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You call husbands and wives to clothe themselves with compassion, humility, patience, and forgiveness:

**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You remain the centre and foundation of every Christian home that seeks You with sincere hearts: **Lord, have mercy.**

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us every moment when we have lost sight of His presence in our lives and homes, heal whatever divides hearts and families, strengthen us in love, patience, and forgiveness, and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

## COLLECT

O God, who revealed in the Holy Family the beauty of love rooted in Your presence, grant that these your servants, united today in the Sacrament of Matrimony, may build a home filled with compassion, patience, forgiveness, and peace. May Christ always remain at the centre of their lives, so that in moments of joy and trial alike they may continually find their way back to 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

A little boy once wandered away from his parents in a crowded marketplace. Panic spread quickly. The parents searched every street, every stall, every alley. After what felt like hours, they found him sitting quietly beside an old musician, listening to him play the violin.

When the mother burst into tears and asked, “Why did you leave us?” the child answered innocently:

“I did not think I was lost... because I could still hear the music.”

That is the secret of the Holy Family.

Even when life became confusing, they never lost the music of God.

Today’s Gospel tells us about the only recorded incident when Mary and Joseph “lost” Jesus. Imagine their fear. The Son entrusted to them by God was nowhere to be found. Every parent understands this anxiety. Every married couple understands moments when something precious seems missing — peace, closeness, trust, joy, tenderness, prayer.

And yet the Gospel is profoundly comforting: they searched together. Mary did not search alone. Joseph did not blame Mary. They carried the anxiety together until they found Jesus again.

That may be the deepest vocation of Christian marriage: not merely to avoid getting lost, but to search together whenever Christ seems distant.

Saint Paul in Colossians gives us the blueprint for such a marriage. He does not speak first about emotions but about virtues: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness.

Why? Because feelings come and go, but virtues sustain love when emotions grow tired.

A wise elderly couple once celebrated seventy years of marriage. Someone asked the husband, "What kept you together so long?" He smiled and said: "We came from a generation where, when something broke, we repaired it instead of replacing it." That is the spirituality of Nazareth.

Today's world often treats relationships as disposable. The Holy Family teaches the opposite: love stays, searches, forgives, repairs, waits, prays, and begins again.

Notice also where Mary and Joseph finally found Jesus — in the Temple, in His Father's house. The lesson is powerful. If a marriage wants to find Christ again and again, it must return to the Father's presence: prayer together, worship together, forgiveness together.

There is another beautiful detail hidden in today's Gospel. Mary says: "Your father and I have been looking for you anxiously." What tenderness in that sentence. Joseph speaks no recorded words in Scripture, yet his silent faithfulness speaks loudly. Some of the holiest love in marriage will not be dramatic speeches but quiet sacrifices no one notices.

A woman once found, after her husband's death, a small notebook hidden in his drawer. In it were written simple daily notes:

"Paid school fees."

"Fixed the leaking roof."

"Stayed awake when she was sick."

"Prayed for the children."

No poetry. No grand declarations. Yet every line said: "I loved my family."

That is Nazareth holiness.

Dear couple, your home will not become holy because it is free from problems. It will become holy every time you choose each other again, forgive again, pray again, and search for Christ again.

There may come days when misunderstandings wound you, when responsibilities exhaust you, when silence enters your relationship. On those days, remember this Gospel: Mary and Joseph did not stop searching until they found Jesus.

And if Christ remains at the centre of your home, then even ordinary things — meals, conversations, tired evenings, children's laughter, shared burdens — become sacred.

Let me end with this story.

After a devastating earthquake, rescuers searched through the ruins of a collapsed home. Beneath broken concrete they found a mother who had died shielding her little child with her body. In her hand was a phone with a final message written before she died. It said: "If you survive, remember that I love you."

The child survived because someone chose sacrificial love.

That is the love revealed in Nazareth.

That is the love Christ blesses today.

And that is the love that will keep this marriage alive: not merely romance, but faithful love that protects, forgives, searches, and never lets go of God.

May this couple build a home where Christ is never lost, where love is repaired more often than replaced, and where every room quietly echoes the music of God.

## PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Gathered as God's family and inspired by the example of the Holy Family of Nazareth, let us bring our prayers before the Lord who never ceases to guide His children home.

1. For the Church throughout the world, that she may continue to strengthen families in faith, forgiveness, and unity, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For this newly married couple, that Christ may always remain at the centre of their home and that their love may grow deeper through patience, sacrifice, and prayer, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For all married couples experiencing trials, misunderstandings, or distance, that they may rediscover one another through mercy and grace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For parents and children, that homes may become places of listening, tenderness, wisdom, and faithfulness, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all gathered here, that we may never lose sight of Christ amid the distractions and anxieties of life, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,  
You guided the Holy Family through every joy and trial. Hear the prayers we place before You today and lead all our families ever closer to 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 for the gift of love and family life, may help this couple build a home where Christ is always welcomed and never lost, 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 the Holy Family of Nazareth  
You have given us a living image  
of faithful love, humble service, and steadfast trust.  
Through the union of husband and wife  
You continue to sanctify human love  
and make the home a place where Your grace may dwell.

In Christ Your Son,  
Mary and Joseph discovered that every journey of life  
finds its meaning in seeking and following Your will.  
And You now call this couple  
to reflect that same holy love through patience, forgiveness, and joy.

Therefore, 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 Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, let us pray to the Father who desires every family to become a dwelling place of peace, forgiveness, and faithful love:

## **NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE**

Let us pray to the Lord for this bride and groom, who come to the altar as they begin their married life in Christ.

Holy Father,  
creator of love and source of every family,  
pour out the grace of Your blessing upon these newlyweds.  
May their home be filled with kindness and patience,  
their words marked by gentleness and truth,  
and their hearts always ready to forgive.

When trials come, strengthen them to search together for Christ.  
When joy fills their lives, teach them gratitude.  
May they protect one another in weakness,  
encourage one another in faith,  
and grow old together in enduring love.

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

May their home become a place of prayer, peace, and hospitality,  
where all who enter may encounter the presence of God.

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 of Christ dwell richly in the homes of all families,  
especially in the life of this newly married couple, so that forgiveness  
may overcome every division and love may remain steadfast through  
every season of life.

Who live and reign for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Behold the Lamb of God,  
behold him who strengthens every home with divine love and  
gathers His people into one family.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

A holy family is not built in a single day.  
It is built slowly — through shared prayers, patient listening, quiet  
sacrifices, forgiven mistakes, and countless ordinary acts of love.

The Holy Family of Nazareth teaches us that God is found not only in  
extraordinary moments but also in everyday faithfulness. May this  
couple always return to Christ together, and may their home become  
a place where His presence is never lost.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at this sacred table, we ask You, Lord, to strengthen this newly married couple with the grace of this Eucharist. May the Body and Blood of Christ sustain them in fidelity, tenderness, and peace, so that their home may reflect the holiness of Nazareth and become a living witness to Your abiding love. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord Jesus, who lived in the home of Nazareth with Mary and Joseph, fill your hearts and your home with His peace. **Amen.**

May He strengthen you in patience during trials, deepen your joy in times of blessing, and keep your love faithful all the days of your life. **Amen.**

May your family become a light to others, a refuge for the weary, and a dwelling place of compassion, prayer, and hope. **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 building homes where Christ is always welcomed, love is faithfully lived, and forgiveness is never withheld.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A holy marriage is not one that never struggles, but one that never stops searching together for Christ.”

## 19. Trusting God in Uncertain Times

**Prov 3:5–6; Mt 14:22–33**

**Theme:** “Holding Hands Through the Storm: Trusting God in Uncertain Times”

## INTRODUCTION

In 1871, after the Great Chicago Fire destroyed thousands of homes, a lawyer named Horatio Spafford stood on the ruins of almost everything he owned. Yet the greater storm came later, when his four daughters died at sea in a shipwreck while crossing the Atlantic. As he sailed over the very waters where they had drowned, he wrote the words: “*When peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll... it is well with my soul.*” Faith did not remove the storm. Faith gave him Someone to hold onto in the storm.

Today’s readings speak directly to every marriage. Proverbs tells us: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart.” In the Gospel, Peter walks on water only while his eyes remain fixed on Jesus. The moment fear becomes greater than trust, he begins to sink. Marriage is beautiful, but it will also face uncertain waters: changing plans, disappointments, illness, misunderstandings, financial burdens, and moments when the future feels unclear. Yet Christian marriage is not the promise of a storm-free life; it is the promise that Christ will never stop saying, “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.”

As we begin this sacred celebration, we recognize the moments when fear has been stronger than faith, when pride has replaced trust, and when we have doubted the nearness of God. Let us therefore open our hearts to the Lord who stretches out His hand to save.

## PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You calm the storms that shake our hearts:

**Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You stretch out Your hand when we begin to sink:

**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You teach us to trust the Father in every uncertainty:

**Lord, have mercy.**

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God,  
who never abandons His children in the storms of life,  
forgive us our fears, strengthen our trust,  
calm the waves within our hearts,  
and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

## COLLECT

O God,  
who in your providence have called N. and N.  
to the covenant of Christian Marriage,  
teach them to trust you with all their hearts  
when the seas of life grow restless and uncertain.  
Grant that, with their eyes fixed always on Christ,  
they may walk together in faith,  
support one another in love,  
and discover your presence in every season of 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 fisherman once told his grandson, “You cannot control the sea. You can only learn whom to trust when the waves rise.” Years later, during a violent storm, that grandson remembered those words. While everyone panicked, he noticed the old captain asleep near the wheel of the boat. The captain had crossed those waters hundreds of times. The young man later said, “The storm was still terrifying, but the calm face of someone experienced gave me peace.”

That is the heart of today’s Gospel. The disciples are terrified because the storm is stronger than their experience. Then Jesus comes walking across the water and says, “Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid.” The miracle is not only that Jesus walks on water. The deeper miracle is that fear does not get the final word.

Dear N. and N., today you are not promising each other a perfect life. You are promising that when storms come, you will not let go of each other’s hands — and more importantly, you will not let go of Christ.

Marriage begins beautifully: photographs, laughter, music, celebrations, dreams. But every married couple eventually discovers that love is tested not in sunshine but in storms. There will be moments when plans fail, health weakens, finances tighten, children struggle, or misunderstandings create distance. Sometimes the greatest storms are invisible — exhaustion, disappointment, loneliness, or silence between two hearts.

A woman once said about her husband after fifty years of marriage: “We survived because whenever one of us stopped believing, the other kept believing for both.” That is Christian marriage. Some days

one person becomes Peter sinking into the waves, and the other becomes the steady voice saying, “Look at Jesus. Don’t give up.”

Peter’s problem was not the storm. The storm was already there before he stepped out of the boat. His problem began when he shifted his eyes from Jesus to the wind. Fear grows whenever we stare too long at the waves.

The same happens in marriage. Couples sink when they focus only on problems: “Will we have enough?” “What if things change?” “What if we fail?” But love grows when husband and wife keep asking together: “Where is Christ in this moment?”

There is a beautiful story of a couple married for over sixty years. Someone asked them, “What kept your marriage alive?” The husband smiled and answered, “Every night before sleeping, we prayed together — especially on the nights we were angry.” Prayer did not erase every argument, but it reminded them that they were on the same side before God.

That is why Proverbs says today: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart.” Not partly. Not only when life is easy. With all your heart.

Trust is the foundation of every marriage:

- trust in God when answers are unclear,
- trust in each other when emotions are wounded,
- trust that love can grow even after failure,
- trust that grace is greater than fear.

The most beautiful line in today’s Gospel comes when Peter cries out, “Lord, save me!” And immediately Jesus stretches out His hand.

Immediately.

Not eventually. Not after a lecture. Immediately.

That is the God who stands at the centre of your marriage today.

Years from now, you may not remember every flower or every song from this wedding. But if you remember to pray together, forgive quickly, speak honestly, laugh often, and hold onto Christ during storms, your marriage will become a living Gospel for others.

There is a final story about a lighthouse keeper during a violent storm. Ships survived because one small light remained burning through the night. The keeper later said, “The storm was never my focus. Keeping the light alive was.”

Dear N. and N., storms will come and go. Keep the light alive. Keep Christ at the centre. And one day people looking at your marriage will say: “They were not fearless people — they were people who trusted God through every uncertainty.” Amen.

## **PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

Trusting in the Lord who guides us through every storm of life, let us place before Him our prayers for the Church, for this couple, and for the world.

### **1. For the Church:**

that she may always help families fix their eyes on Christ amid the uncertainties of modern life, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

## **2. For N. and N.:**

that their marriage may be rooted in prayer, strengthened by trust, and sustained by God's faithful love through every joy and trial, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

## **3. For married couples experiencing difficulties:**

that Christ, who stretched out His hand to Peter, may bring healing, reconciliation, and renewed hope to their homes, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

## **4. For families burdened by fear, uncertainty, illness, or financial struggles:**

that they may discover God's presence even in the darkest moments, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

## **5. For all gathered here:**

that this celebration may renew in us the courage to trust God more deeply each day, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of mercy and strength, hear the prayers we place before you with trusting hearts, and guide us safely through every storm of life. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Pray, brothers and sisters,  
that this sacrifice,  
offered in faith and trust amid all the uncertainties 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 have made the covenant of marriage  
a living sign of your faithful presence among your people.  
In moments of peace and in seasons of storm,  
you remain the unfailing anchor of every Christian home.

Through Christ your Son,  
you teach us not to fear the winds and waves of life,  
but to trust that your hand is always stretched out to save.  
You call husband and wife  
to walk together in faith,  
to strengthen one another in weakness,  
and to become witnesses of hope in a world filled with uncertainty.

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 Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching,  
we dare to say the prayer of children  
who trust completely in the love and providence of the Father:

## **NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE**

Let us pray to the Lord for N. and N.,  
who come to one altar at the beginning of their married life,  
that through communion in the Body and Blood of Christ  
they may remain united in love.

Holy Father, creator of all things,  
you made man and woman in your image  
and blessed their union with your grace.

Pour out the abundance of your blessing upon N. and N.  
Defend them from every storm that threatens their peace,  
strengthen them when faith is tested,  
and keep their hearts anchored in Christ.

Grant that they may always trust one another,  
support one another in weakness,  
forgive one another quickly,  
and rejoice together in every blessing you provide.

May their home be filled with prayer, laughter, patience, and hope.  
Bless them with the gift of children,  
that they may lovingly raise them in faith and virtue  
and become a family radiant with the light of the Gospel.

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.  
Strengthen also the homes of all married couples,  
that amid the changing tides of life  
they may remain steadfast in love and trust.  
Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Behold the Lamb of God,  
behold him who reaches out His hand to save us  
when we are sinking.  
Happy are those who place their trust in Him and walk in His love.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

Lord,  
in every marriage there will be moments of calm  
and moments when the winds grow strong.  
Teach us not to be afraid of the storm,  
for you are already there within it.  
May this couple always remember  
that love is not the absence of struggle,  
but the courage to trust you together.  
And when their strength is small,  
may they hear again your voice:  
"Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."

## 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 remain faithful in love, steadfast in hope,  
and courageous in times of uncertainty.  
May this sacrament deepen their trust in you  
and keep them united all the days of their life.  
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.  
May He guide you safely through every storm of life.  
May He strengthen your love in times of trial,  
fill your home with peace and joy,  
and deepen your trust in His providence each day.  
May He bless you with children,  
surround your family with His protection,  
and lead you together to the eternal joy of heaven.  
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 trusting Him in every uncertainty  
and by loving one another faithfully through every storm.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

A strong marriage is not one that never faces storms,  
but one that never stops holding onto Christ in the storm.

## 20. Marriage and the Theology of the Body

**Gen 1:26–31; Mt 19:3–6**

**Theme:** “Created in the Image of God: Marriage as the Visible  
Language of Divine Love”

## INTRODUCTION

There is a Jewish legend about a rabbi who asked his students why God created Adam from dust. One student answered, “To teach humility.” Another said, “To show that all are equal.” The rabbi smiled and said, “Yes—but also because dust alone cannot stand. It must cling together to become clay.” Human beings were not created for isolation but for communion. In the beginning, God looked at all creation and called it good; but when He saw man alone, something was incomplete. Marriage was born not from human invention but from the heart of God Himself.

Today, dear friends, we witness something sacred: two persons choosing to become one flesh, one journey, one future. In a world that often treats the body as an object, today’s Gospel reminds us that the body speaks a holy language. A husband and wife are not merely signing a contract; they are proclaiming with their lives: “I belong to you completely.” Their unity becomes a visible reflection of God’s faithful and creative love.

Yet we also know that love is not always easy. We have sometimes wounded others through selfishness, pride, impatience, or the misuse of words and actions. Therefore, before we celebrate these sacred mysteries and witness this covenant of love, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord for mercy and healing.

## PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You created man and woman in Your own image and called them to become one in love: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You revealed through Your own Body the fullness of faithful and sacrificial love: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You sanctify married love and make the family a sign of Your presence in the world: **Lord, have mercy.**

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God,  
who created us in love and calls us into communion with Himself,  
forgive us every sin that has wounded love,  
weakened fidelity, and diminished the dignity of one another,  
and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

## COLLECT

O God,  
who created man and woman in Your own image  
and made their union a living sign of Your faithful love,  
pour out the grace of Your blessing upon these Your servants.  
Teach them to honour one another with reverence,  
to cherish the dignity of body and soul,  
and to become for the world a witness of covenant love.  
Grant that their home may radiate joy, forgiveness, and peace,  
and that all gathered here may grow in the understanding  
that true love comes from You alone.  
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 sculptor once spent months carving a magnificent crucifix from a single block of wood. When people admired the beauty of the finished work, they asked him, “How did you create something so lifelike?” The sculptor replied, “I simply removed everything that did not belong to Christ.”

Marriage is much the same. Two people stand before God today, beautiful in their individuality, yet marriage will slowly carve away selfishness, pride, fear, and isolation until the image of divine love begins to appear within them. Love is not merely found; it is formed.

In the Book of Genesis, God says something astonishing: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” Humanity carries the imprint of God. But the image becomes most visible not in isolation but in communion. God creates man and woman, different yet equal, distinct yet united. Their union reveals something about God Himself—that love is relational, self-giving, life-giving.

The theology of the body teaches us that the human body is not accidental. The body speaks. The body reveals. The body is capable of expressing fidelity, tenderness, sacrifice, and total self-gift. In marriage, husband and wife say through their vows what Christ says to the Church: “This is my body, given for you.”

There is a moving story from World War II about a husband whose wife suffered severe burns in a bombing raid. After months in hospital, she refused to see him because her face had become disfigured. She feared he could no longer love her. But the husband persisted. Finally, when he entered her room, he gently took her

scarred face into his hands and said, “The fire did not destroy your beauty. It revealed the depth of my love.” That is covenant love—not loving because someone is perfect, but loving until wounds themselves become sacred.

Jesus in today’s Gospel says, “What God has joined together, let no man separate.” Notice: marriage is first God’s work before it becomes ours. Society may redefine marriage according to convenience, but Christ restores it to its original beauty. Marriage is not a temporary arrangement based on feelings; it is a covenant rooted in grace.

Feelings rise and fall. Beauty changes. Strength weakens. But covenant remains.

A married couple celebrating sixty years together were once asked the secret of their lasting marriage. The elderly wife answered, “We came from a generation that repaired things instead of replacing them.” What wisdom! Today many relationships collapse because people treat persons like disposable objects. But Christian marriage says: “I will remain. I will repair. I will forgive. I will begin again.”

And that is where the theology of the body becomes deeply Eucharistic. Every Eucharist is Christ saying again: “This is my body given for you.” Marriage echoes the same mystery daily—in patience after an argument, in caring during sickness, in staying faithful when life becomes ordinary, in choosing love even when emotions are tired.

Dear bride and groom, your marriage will preach sermons no microphone can ever proclaim. Your tenderness will teach children

what God is like. Your forgiveness will reveal mercy. Your fidelity will become hope for a wounded world.

There is an old story about a village church whose stained-glass windows were shattered during a storm. The villagers were devastated. But when the morning sun rose, the broken fragments on the floor reflected light in hundreds of unexpected colors across the church walls. Sometimes marriage will also pass through storms. Yet even broken moments surrendered to God can reflect grace more beautifully than untouched perfection.

So today, do not merely admire love—become it. Let your hands bless, your words heal, your bodies honour, your home welcome, and your covenant reveal the image of God.

And one day, after years of sacrifices hidden from the world, after tears and laughter, after ordinary days transformed by faithful love, may people look at your marriage and say: “There, in that home, God became visible.”

## PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrating God’s gift of covenant love revealed in marriage, let us bring before Him our prayers for the Church, the world, and this newly married couple.

1. For the Church, that she may faithfully proclaim the dignity of human love, the sanctity of the body, and the beauty of Christian marriage, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. For married couples throughout the world, that they may reflect God’s faithful love through patience, forgiveness, tenderness, and

lifelong commitment, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

**3.** For this bride and groom, that their home may become a sanctuary of peace, joy, prayer, and hospitality, and that they may always honour one another as gifts from God, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

**4.** For families wounded by division, betrayal, or loneliness, that Christ may heal hearts and restore communion where love has grown weak, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

**5.** For all gathered here, that we may learn to see every human person as created in God's image and worthy of reverence and love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,

You created us in love and called us into communion with one another. Hear the prayers we place before You today and strengthen us to live as faithful witnesses of Your covenant love. Through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

### **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Pray, brothers and sisters,  
that this sacrifice, in which Christ gives His Body  
for the life of the world  
and sanctifies the love of 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 in the beginning, You created man and woman in Your image  
and called them to live not in isolation but in communion of love.

In the covenant of marriage

You reveal the mystery of Your faithful presence among Your  
people, and through the union of husband and wife

You make visible the tenderness, fidelity, and fruitfulness of divine  
love.

In Christ Your Son,

who gave His Body for the salvation of the world,  
married love is purified, strengthened, and made holy.

Through the grace of this sacrament

You teach husbands and wives to become signs of self-giving love,  
to bear one another's burdens,

and to build homes where forgiveness and peace may flourish.

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 one Father,  
asking that this new family may always reflect the unity,  
trust, and self-giving love revealed by Christ Himself.

## **NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE**

Holy Father,  
creator of all love and source of every blessing,  
look with kindness upon these newly married servants  
who today have bound themselves to one another in a sacred  
covenant.

Pour into their hearts the grace of the Holy Spirit,  
that they may honour one another in body, mind, and soul,  
and reveal through their marriage  
the faithful love of Christ for His Church.

Grant them patience in suffering,  
joy in companionship,  
wisdom in decisions,  
and generosity in forgiveness.  
May their words strengthen one another,  
their hands serve one another,  
and their home become a refuge of peace 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, hope, and charity.

And after a lifetime of fidelity and love,  
bring them 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 You give strengthen the covenant of this husband  
and wife, so that their home may become a place where wounds are  
healed, forgiveness is offered, and love endures.

Who live and reign for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Behold the Lamb of God,  
behold Him who gives His Body for the life of the world  
and teaches us the meaning of faithful love.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

Love becomes believable when it becomes visible.  
Today Christ has given Himself to us in the Eucharist.  
Soon this bride and groom will begin giving themselves to one  
another in countless hidden ways—in patience, sacrifice,  
tenderness, and fidelity.  
Marriage is not built in grand moments alone,  
but in daily acts of self-giving that quietly reflect heaven.  
May this Eucharist remain the centre of their home,  
for only love nourished by Christ can endure every season  
and become a light for the world.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of heavenly grace,  
we pray, O Lord,  
that You may strengthen this newly married couple  
in unity, fidelity, and peace.  
May the Body and Blood of Christ  
teach them daily the meaning of self-giving love,  
and help all of us to recognize in every human person  
the dignity of those created in Your image.  
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord who created you in His image  
fill your hearts with faithful and enduring love. **Amen.**  
May He bless your home with peace, joy, generosity,  
and the gift of children raised in faith and holiness. **Amen.**  
May Christ remain at the centre of your marriage,  
strengthening you in every trial  
and making your lives a visible sign of divine love in the world.  
**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 love you show one another  
and by the witness of your lives.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Marriage is not merely two people living together;  
it is two persons becoming a living reflection of the love of God.

## 21. Love that Sacrifices and Serves

**Phil 2:1–11; Jn 13:1–15**

**Theme:** “Love Kneels Down: The Greatness of a Marriage that Sacrifices and Serves.”

## INTRODUCTION

In 2008, during the Beijing Olympics, a young sailor named Ben Ainslie lost an important race because another competitor deliberately obstructed him. Angry and humiliated, he wanted revenge. But later, when reporters asked him what changed his heart, he said something unforgettable: “*Winning is not worth becoming a smaller man.*” Greatness is not measured by how high one stands above others, but by how deeply one is willing to stoop in love. Today, as N. and N. come before this altar, Christ reveals that the strongest marriages are not built by power, pride, or perfection, but by humble love that serves.

Saint Paul tells us in Philippians that Jesus “emptied himself” and took the form of a servant. And in the Gospel, the Lord of heaven kneels on the floor to wash dusty feet. The Son of God holds a towel instead of a throne. In a world where many ask, “What can I receive?”, Christ asks married couples, “How deeply can you love?”

But we know that pride, selfishness, impatience, and wounded words can prevent us from loving as Christ loves. Therefore, before we celebrate these sacred mysteries and witness this covenant of love, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord for mercy and the grace to serve one another with humble hearts.

## PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you humbled yourself to become the servant of all:

**Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, you washed the feet of your disciples and taught us to love through service: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you call husbands and wives to lay down their lives for one another in faithful love: **Lord, have mercy.**

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God,  
who teaches us that true greatness is found in humble love  
and sacrificial service,  
forgive us our sins, heal our selfishness, strengthen us in charity,  
and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

## COLLECT

O God, who revealed in your Son  
that love reaches its fullness in humble service  
and self-giving sacrifice,  
grant that N. and N., united today in the covenant of marriage,  
may imitate Christ who knelt to serve  
and gave himself completely for the salvation of the world.  
Teach them to carry one another's burdens with patience,  
tenderness, and joy,  
so that their home may become a living witness  
of the Gospel of 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 asked Mother Teresa, "What is the greatest problem in the world today?" Many expected her to speak about poverty, war, or disease. Instead, she answered quietly: "*The feeling of being unwanted.*"

That is the tragedy of many relationships — not the absence of words, but the absence of sacrificial love. People can live under one roof and still feel alone. Yet today's Gospel gives us one of the most shocking images in all Scripture: Jesus kneeling before his disciples with a basin and towel. The hands that created the universe now wash human feet.

And notice carefully — Jesus even washed the feet of Judas, the one who would betray him. Love served even when love was not deserved.

That is the kind of marriage Christ blesses today.

The world often says marriage is about finding the right person who fulfills your needs. Jesus says marriage is becoming the kind of person who willingly serves the other even when it costs something. Real love is not proved in candlelight dinners or romantic words alone; it is proved in tired evenings, difficult conversations, silent sacrifices, forgiveness after arguments, patience during illness, and faithfulness when emotions fade.

There is a story of an elderly husband whose wife suffered from Alzheimer's disease. Every morning he visited her in the nursing home and fed her breakfast. A nurse once asked him, "Does your

wife know who you are?” He smiled gently and said, “She may not know who I am, but I still know who she is.”

That is love.

Love that remembers its promise even when life becomes difficult.

Saint Paul tells us today that Christ “emptied himself.” Marriage also requires a holy emptying — emptying pride to make room for forgiveness; emptying selfishness to make room for generosity; emptying ego to make room for tenderness.

The danger in marriage is not that love suddenly dies. Love usually dies slowly — through neglected kindness, postponed apologies, harsh words, wounded silence, and the refusal to serve. Many marriages collapse not because of one great betrayal, but because spouses stop kneeling before one another in humble love.

A man once complained to a priest: “Father, my wife has changed.” The priest replied, “Have you continued loving the person she is becoming?” That question pierces every marriage. Because love is not merely falling in love with someone’s beauty; it is choosing daily to carry their weakness, fears, scars, and imperfections.

Jesus says today: *“I have given you an example.”*

Not a theory.

Not a poem.

An example.

The towel and basin are now handed to N. and N.

Some days, serving one another will feel easy. Other days, it will feel like carrying a cross. But every hidden sacrifice made in love

becomes holy. Every act of forgiveness becomes a participation in Christ’s own love.

There is an old story about a couple married for over sixty years. When the husband died, people found in his wallet a tiny, faded note written by his wife on their wedding day. It simply said: *“I will spend my life trying to make your burdens lighter.”* He had carried it every day until his death.

That is the secret of Christian marriage:

not “How happy can you make me?”

but “How faithfully can I love you?”

And when two people begin to live like that, heaven quietly enters their home.

## **PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

Celebrating Christ who came not to be served but to serve, let us pray for the Church, for this newly married couple, and for all who seek to live in faithful love.

1. For the Church, that she may always reflect the humble and serving love of Christ in the world, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For N. and N., that their marriage may be rooted in sacrifice, forgiveness, tenderness, and joyful service to one another, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples experiencing trials, misunderstandings, or suffering, that Christ may renew their love and strengthen their commitment, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For families burdened by loneliness, illness, poverty, or division, that they may encounter healing through compassionate love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all gathered here, that we may learn from Christ the beauty of humility and selfless service, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of mercy,  
you revealed your love through the humble service of your Son.  
Hear the prayers we offer today  
and make our lives a reflection of Christ's self-giving love.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

#### **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Pray, brothers and sisters,  
that this sacrifice of love and thanksgiving,  
in which Christ teaches us to serve one another with humble hearts,  
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 true love is found not in domination but in service,  
not in pride but in humble self-giving.

For he who is Lord of heaven and earth  
knelt before his disciples to wash their feet,  
teaching all married couples  
that the beauty of love is fulfilled in sacrifice and fidelity.

Today you bless N. and N.,  
uniting them in a sacred covenant,  
so that through patient service, mutual forgiveness,  
and enduring tenderness,  
their home may become a living sign of Christ's love for his Church.

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 teaches us that love becomes greatest  
when it humbly serves others.

## NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE

Let us pray to the Lord for N. and N.,  
who come today to begin their married life before God  
and his Church.

Holy Father,  
creator of love and source of every blessing,  
pour out your grace upon these your servants  
who have joined themselves in the covenant of marriage.

Grant that they may follow the example of Christ,  
who loved with humility and served with tenderness.  
Teach them to seek not their own advantage  
but the good and joy of one another.

When trials come, strengthen them with patience.  
When wounds arise, deepen in them the grace of forgiveness.  
When burdens grow heavy, help them carry each other in love.

Bless their home with peace, laughter, and fidelity.  
May they be rich in compassion, steadfast in faith, and generous  
toward all in need.

Grant them the blessing of children,  
that they may lovingly welcome new life  
and raise their sons and daughters in wisdom, faith, and charity.

And after a lifetime of faithful love and sacrificial service,  
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 build peace within our homes through humble  
service, patient forgiveness, and faithful love.  
Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,  
behold him who humbled himself in love and gave his life for us,  
teaching us that true greatness is found in serving one another.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love becomes holy when it bends down to serve.  
Today Christ has given himself again upon this altar,  
and he now enters the hearts of N. and N.  
The One who washed feet now strengthens them  
to wash away each other's tears, fears,  
and burdens through a lifetime of faithful love.  
May their marriage never become a search for comfort alone,  
but a daily offering of tenderness, sacrifice, forgiveness, and joy.  
For the strongest marriages are not built by those who demand  
to be loved, but by those who never grow tired of loving.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at this sacred table  
in the Bread of life and the Chalice of salvation,  
we pray, O Lord,  
that N. and N., strengthened by the example and presence of Christ,  
may persevere in mutual service and faithful love.  
May this Eucharist deepen their unity,  
heal their weaknesses,  
and make their home a living witness  
to the joy of sacrificial love.  
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord Jesus, who knelt to serve his disciples in love,  
teach you to serve one another with humble and faithful hearts.

**Amen.**

May he strengthen you in every sacrifice, comfort you in every trial,  
and deepen your joy through lifelong fidelity. **Amen.**

May your home become a place of peace, tenderness,  
forgiveness, and generous 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 loving and serving one another  
through lives of faithful and sacrificial love.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A holy marriage is not built by two people seeking to be served,  
but by two people kneeling daily to serve one another in love.”

## 22. Friendship as the Foundation of Marriage

**Sirach 6:5–17; Jn 15:12–17**

**Theme:** “Marriage: A Friendship Strong Enough to Carry Heaven  
into Everyday Life.”

## INTRODUCTION

In 1939, when Europe was collapsing into war, C.S. Lewis visited his old friend Arthur Greeves after years apart. The world outside was burning with fear, but the two friends spent hours simply talking, laughing, and remembering. Later Lewis wrote that friendship is born at the moment one person says to another: “*What? You too?*” Friendship creates a space where masks fall away and souls can breathe again. Today, as N. and N. come before the altar, they are not only celebrating romance; they are sealing a friendship — a sacred companionship in which two people promise to walk toward God side by side.

The readings today speak precisely of this holy friendship. Sirach tells us that a faithful friend is beyond price, “a sturdy shelter” and “a treasure.” In the Gospel, Jesus goes even deeper: “I no longer call you servants... I have called you friends.” Christian marriage becomes beautiful not merely when husband and wife love each other emotionally, but when they become true friends — able to listen, forgive, laugh, pray, and carry each other through changing seasons of life.

Yet friendship also demands humility. We have all failed at times to listen deeply, to remain faithful, to speak kindly, or to love generously. Therefore, before we celebrate these sacred mysteries and witness this covenant of friendship in Christ, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord for mercy.

## PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You call us no longer servants but friends,  
Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You teach us that the greatest love is to lay down one's  
life for another, Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, You remain faithful even when human love grows weak,  
Lord, have mercy.

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who calls us into friendship with His Son,  
forgive the selfishness that wounds relationships,  
heal every failure in love and fidelity,  
strengthen us in mercy and compassion,  
and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

## COLLECT

O God, who in your divine wisdom  
have taught us  
that faithful friendship is one of life's greatest treasures,  
look with love upon N. and N.,  
who today enter the covenant of marriage.  
May their friendship grow ever deeper in Christ,  
their love remain steadfast in times of joy and trial,  
and their home become a place of welcome, laughter,  
forgiveness, and peace.  
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 asked an elderly couple who had been married for sixty  
years, "What is the secret of your marriage?"

The old woman smiled and said, "We never fell out of love."

The husband laughed gently and corrected her:

"Oh yes, many times we fell out of love. But we never fell out of  
friendship."

That is the punchline of Christian marriage.

Romance begins a relationship. Attraction awakens it. Beauty draws  
two people together. But friendship is what carries a marriage across  
decades. Friendship is what remains when beauty changes, when  
energy fades, when life becomes difficult, when misunderstandings  
happen, and when tears replace excitement.

Sirach says today:

"A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter."

Not a decoration. Not an accessory. A shelter.

The world often defines marriage by feelings. But feelings rise and  
fall like waves. Friendship is deeper. Friendship says:

"I know your weaknesses and I will not leave."

"I know your fears and I will not mock them."

"I know your past and I still choose you."

That is why Jesus changes the language in today's Gospel. He says:  
"I no longer call you servants... I call you friends."

Imagine that.

The Son of God does not merely command us — He befriends us.

And how does Jesus define friendship?

“The greatest love a person can have is to lay down his life for his friends.”

Christian friendship is sacrificial.

There is a story about two monks travelling through a forest during winter. One monk slipped into an icy river and could not climb out. The other monk carried him for miles through the snow until they reached safety. Years later someone asked the rescued monk, “How could your friend carry such weight for so long?”

The monk replied:

“He did not carry me as a burden. He carried me as his brother.”

That is marriage.

One day one of you will become weak — emotionally, spiritually, physically, or emotionally exhausted. On that day love will no longer feel romantic. It will feel heavy. But friendship says:

“You are not a burden to me. You are my beloved companion.”

And notice something beautiful in the Gospel: Jesus says, “I chose you.”

Marriage is not merely finding the right person. It is continuing to choose the same person every day.

Choose each other in ordinary moments:

when one is sick,  
when money is tight,  
when stress enters the home,

when misunderstandings arise,  
when silence becomes uncomfortable.

A priest once visited a dying man in hospital. The man pointed weakly to his wife sitting beside him and whispered, “Father, she has held my hand for forty-three years.” The priest said, “You are blessed.” The man shook his head gently and replied, “No, Father... *she* is tired. But she still holds on.”

That is covenant.

That is friendship purified by grace.

N. and N., today you stand before the altar surrounded by flowers, music, and celebration. But years from now, your marriage will not be remembered because of the decorations of this day. It will be remembered because of the ordinary faithfulness with which you treated one another:

the listening,  
the patience,  
the apologies,  
the prayers,  
the laughter after difficult days,  
the quiet acts nobody saw.

Friendship is holy because it mirrors the very heart of Christ.

And let me end with this.

During the funeral of an elderly woman, someone asked her husband, “What will you miss most about your wife?”

The old man paused for a long time. Tears filled his eyes. Finally he answered:

“She was the only person with whom I could completely be myself.”  
That is heaven beginning on earth.

When two people become a safe place for each other’s soul, God is already dwelling in that marriage.

N. and N., may your marriage become exactly that:  
a friendship so faithful, so joyful, and so enduring that everyone who sees you will understand a little more clearly how Christ loves His people. Amen.

### **PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

Trusting in Christ, who calls us His friends and teaches us to love faithfully, let us bring our prayers before the Father.

1. For the Church, that she may always be a faithful friend to the lonely, the wounded, and the forgotten, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For N. and N., that their marriage may grow stronger through prayer, forgiveness, laughter, and enduring friendship, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples experiencing difficulties, that Christ may renew tenderness, patience, and trust within their homes, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For families and friends gathered here, that their love and support may strengthen this couple throughout their lives, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For those who long for friendship, companionship, or reconciliation, that they may discover the healing presence of Christ, let us pray to the Lord.  
**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of love and friendship, hear the prayers we place before you today, and keep us united in the love 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 in thanksgiving for the gift of faithful friendship 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 you created us not to walk alone,  
but to find strength, comfort, and joy in one another.  
In the covenant of marriage  
you unite man and woman in a communion of life and love,  
so that through friendship, fidelity, and sacrifice  
they may reflect the love of Christ for His Church.

In your Son, Jesus Christ,  
you revealed the deepest meaning of friendship,  
for He laid down His life for those He loved

and called His disciples friends.  
Through Him you teach us  
that true love is patient in suffering, faithful in trials,  
gentle in speech, generous in forgiveness,  
and steadfast through the passing years.

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 Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching,  
let us pray to the Father,  
asking that this new family may always remain united in friendship,  
fidelity, and peace.

### **NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE**

Let us pray to the Lord for N. and N., who come to begin their  
married life at God's altar.

Holy Father,  
creator of love and source of lasting friendship,  
pour out your blessing upon N. and N.

Grant that they may remain faithful companions all the days of their  
life, quick to forgive, slow to anger,  
constant in prayer, and joyful in hope.

May they carry one another's burdens with tenderness,  
find strength in times of trial,  
and never allow hardship to weaken the bond they seal today.

Bless their home with peace and laughter.  
May their table always welcome others,  
their hearts remain open to your grace,  
and their love become a witness of Christ's presence in the world.

Grant also that they may be blessed with children,  
whom they may raise in wisdom, faith, and charity.

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 friendship shared in Christian homes become a sign of your  
reconciling love in the world.

Who live and reign for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,  
behold Him who calls us friends  
and teaches us to lay down our lives in love for one another.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love grows beautiful not in grand moments alone, but in daily  
faithfulness.

A holy marriage is built slowly:  
through listening,  
through patience,  
through shared burdens,  
through prayer,  
through friendship that refuses to give up.  
May Christ, who has shared His life with us at this altar,  
remain always at the centre of this new home.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of your love,  
we pray, O Lord,  
that N. and N. may always remain united in heart and spirit.  
Strengthened by this Eucharist,  
may they continue to grow in friendship, fidelity, and generous  
service,  
until they rejoice together in the eternal banquet of heaven.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless your friendship,  
strengthen your love,  
and keep your hearts faithful to one another.

May He grant you patience in difficulties,  
joy in your home,  
wisdom in decisions,  
and peace in every season of life.

May your marriage become a shelter for one another,  
a light to others,  
and a living sign of Christ's 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 your faithful love, your enduring  
friendship, and your joyful service to one another.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Romance may begin a marriage, but friendship is what carries it  
faithfully to heaven.”

## 23. Growing Old Together in Grace

**Prov 16:31; Lk 2:25–38**

**Theme:** “Growing Old Together in Grace: A Love That Ripens Before God.”

### INTRODUCTION

There is an old photograph in a nursing home in Italy. Every evening, an elderly man in his nineties would walk slowly with his walking stick to the room of his wife who no longer remembered his name because of Alzheimer’s disease. One nurse finally asked him, “Why do you still go every day when she does not know who you are?” The old man smiled gently and replied, “Because I still know who she is.”

That is love that has ripened into grace. Not merely romance that burns brightly for a season, but covenant love that deepens through years, wrinkles, tears, silence, forgiveness, and fidelity.

Today’s readings speak precisely about that kind of holiness. Proverbs says, “Gray hair is a crown of glory.” In the Gospel, Simeon and Anna appear not as young dreamers, but as elderly believers whose long years of waiting made them radiant with wisdom and hope. They teach us that the most beautiful marriages are not those without struggles, but those that continue walking with God through every season of life.

As we gather to celebrate this sacred covenant, we also recognize how often love grows impatient, how easily we fail in tenderness, gratitude, and perseverance. Therefore, let us approach the Lord with humble hearts and ask for mercy and grace.

### PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You teach us that faithful love grows stronger through sacrifice and time: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You bless those who remain steadfast in hope through every season of life: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You call married couples to become signs of enduring love and holiness in the world:  
**Lord, have mercy.**

### PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God,  
who patiently forms our hearts through the years  
and teaches us to love with fidelity,  
tenderness, and perseverance,  
forgive us our sins, strengthen us in grace,  
and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

### COLLECT

O God, who reveal Your glory in love that endures  
and in hearts that remain faithful through the passing years,  
look kindly upon Your servants gathered here today.  
Grant that, united in the grace of this sacrament,  
they may grow old together in wisdom, joy, and holiness,  
bearing witness to steadfast love before 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 journalist once asked an elderly couple who had been married for over seventy years, “What is the secret of your long marriage?” The wife answered immediately: “We were born in a time when if something broke, we fixed it — we did not throw it away.”

That sentence contains the Gospel of marriage.

Today we live in a world that replaces almost everything: phones, furniture, friendships, commitments. But God’s love does not replace — God restores, heals, renews, and deepens. That is why today’s readings are so powerful. Proverbs tells us that gray hair is a crown of glory. Scripture does not glorify youth alone. It glorifies endurance. A crown is not given at the beginning of the race but at the end.

In the Gospel, Simeon and Anna stand in the Temple as elderly figures who had spent decades waiting for God. Imagine that. Years of prayer. Years of disappointment. Years of silence. Yet they did not become bitter. Their waiting matured into wisdom. When Mary and Joseph brought the child Jesus into the Temple, Simeon immediately recognized salvation. Long fidelity had sharpened his spiritual vision.

Marriage works the same way.

Young love often says: “I cannot live without you.”

Mature love says: “I choose to remain with you.”

Holy love says: “Together we will walk toward God.”

There is a Japanese art called *Kintsugi*. When a bowl breaks, the cracks are repaired with gold. The repaired vessel becomes more beautiful than before because its wounds become part of its story.

Every marriage eventually develops cracks: misunderstandings, disappointments, sickness, financial struggles, moments of exhaustion. But grace can fill those cracks with gold. Couples who forgive become more beautiful than couples who never struggled.

A priest once visited an elderly husband caring for his bedridden wife. He asked him, “Do you ever get tired?” The old man replied, “Every day. But love taught me that tiredness is not the opposite of joy.”

What a profound truth. Real love is not merely emotional excitement. It is daily presence. It is choosing each other again and again.

Simeon and Anna also teach us another secret: marriages survive when God remains at the centre. They were people of prayer. Couples who pray together slowly begin to see each other differently — not merely as partners, but as gifts entrusted by God.

One of the saddest things in life is not growing old. The saddest thing is growing old without becoming tender. Some people age physically but become harder spiritually. Yet holy couples become gentler with time. Their love softens. Their patience deepens. Their words become kinder.

Years from now, people may not remember the beauty of today’s flowers or decorations. But they will remember whether this couple learned to love deeply, forgive generously, laugh often, and remain faithful.

And finally, let me end with this story.

An elderly couple died only hours apart after sixty-five years of marriage. Their granddaughter later found a handwritten note inside

the grandfather's Bible. It said:  
"Loving her was the closest thing to heaven that I experienced on earth."

That is the vocation of Christian marriage: not merely to live together, but to help one another reach heaven together.  
And when love ripens in grace, even wrinkles become sacred signs of fidelity. Amen.

### **PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

Celebrating the enduring grace of faithful love, let us now bring our prayers before God, who guides His people through every season of life.

1. For the Church, that she may continue to witness to faithful and enduring love in a world marked by instability and division, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. For N. and N., that their marriage may grow stronger through prayer, forgiveness, tenderness, and perseverance, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
3. For married couples who are burdened by illness, disappointment, or loneliness, that God may renew their hope and deepen their love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
4. For the elderly, especially those who feel forgotten, that they may know they are treasured as crowns of wisdom and witnesses of grace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all of us gathered here, that we may learn to repair relationships with mercy rather than abandon them in anger, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of enduring love,  
You never abandon those who trust in You.  
Hear the prayers we place before You today  
and teach us to walk faithfully toward You  
through all the seasons of life.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

### **INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Pray, brothers and sisters,  
that this sacrifice,  
offered in thanksgiving for love  
that grows stronger through time and grace,  
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 through all the seasons of life.  
In faithful marriages You reveal the beauty of covenant love,  
a love strengthened by patience, purified by sacrifice,  
and ripened through the passing years.

In Simeon and Anna You show us  
that hearts which remain steadfast before You  
become radiant with wisdom and hope.  
And in Christian marriage  
You continue to form couples into living signs  
of fidelity, tenderness, and enduring 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 guides us faithfully through every season of life.

#### **NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE**

Holy Father,  
Creator of all love and source of lasting fidelity,  
look with kindness upon these newly married servants, N. and N.  
Grant that their love may deepen with the passing years,  
their home be filled with peace and gratitude,  
and their hearts remain steadfast in times of joy and trial alike.  
Teach them to forgive quickly,  
to speak gently,  
to carry one another's burdens,  
and to grow old together in grace and holiness.

Bless them with the gift of children,  
that their family may become a living witness  
to faith, hope, and enduring love.  
And after a long and fruitful life together,  
bring them at last 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 all married couples with the grace to preserve peace  
within their homes through patience, understanding,  
and enduring love. Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

#### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Behold the Lamb of God,  
behold Him who strengthens faithful hearts  
and sustains enduring love.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

#### **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

Love becomes holy not in a single moment,  
but through thousands of faithful moments.  
A hand held during sickness, a forgiveness offered after hurt,  
a prayer whispered together at night —  
these are the quiet places where grace grows old beautifully.  
May this Eucharist strengthen such love  
in every heart gathered here today.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of eternal love,  
we humbly ask You, Lord,  
to strengthen Your servants in fidelity and grace,  
that nourished by this sacrament,  
they may persevere in unity, joy,  
and holiness throughout their lives.  
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless your love  
so that it may grow deeper with every passing year. **Amen.**

May He grant you patience in trials,  
joy in companionship, and peace within your home. **Amen.**

May your lives together become a witness  
that faithful love is possible, beautiful, and holy. **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 lives of faithful love, enduring  
hope, and steadfast grace.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Marriage is not simply staying together long enough to grow old;  
it is allowing love, forgiveness,  
and grace to grow deep enough to become holy.”

## 24. Hospitality and the Christian Home

**Heb 13:1–2; Lk 10:38–42**

**Theme:** “A Home with an Open Door and an Open Heart.”

*Christian marriage is not only about building a house together, but about creating a home where Christ is welcomed, where love becomes hospitality, and where others encounter peace, warmth, and God’s presence.*

## INTRODUCTION

In a small European village there once stood an old house known by everyone simply as “The Lamp House.” Every evening, no matter the weather, an elderly widow would place a lamp in her window. Travelers lost in fog or snow knew that if they reached that house, they would find soup on the table, dry clothes near the fire, and someone who would listen to their story. After the woman died, the villagers discovered that many lives had been saved because one person decided that her home would never become closed in upon itself. A house became holy because its doors remained open. Today, dear friends, we gather to celebrate not merely the union of two people in marriage, but the beginning of a Christian home. The Letter to the Hebrews tells us: “Do not neglect hospitality.” And in the Gospel, Martha opens her home to Jesus while Mary opens her heart to Him. A Christian family must learn both: the service of Martha and the listening heart of Mary. A home becomes sacred not because it is large or beautiful, but because Christ is welcomed there.

Yet every family can become too busy, too wounded, too distracted to notice Christ standing at the door in one another, in children, in guests, and in the poor. Therefore, as we begin this sacred celebration, let us ask the Lord for mercy and for hearts that know how to welcome His presence.

## PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You come to dwell in every home that welcomes You with love: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You teach us to serve one another with generous and joyful hearts: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You call Christian families to become signs of Your peace and hospitality in the world: **Lord, have mercy.**

## PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,  
forgive us the times we have closed our hearts to His presence  
and failed to recognize Him in one another,  
free us from selfishness and fear, and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

## COLLECT

O God, who reveal Your presence  
in every home that welcomes love, peace, and faith,  
look kindly upon Your servants  
joined today in the Sacrament of Matrimony.  
Grant that their home may become  
a place of prayer and compassion,  
where strangers are welcomed, children are cherished,  
the suffering are comforted,  
and Christ Himself is always received with joy.  
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 Calcutta to interview Saint Teresa of Kolkata. He expected strategies, statistics, and plans about changing the world. Instead, Mother Teresa quietly said to him, “If you want to change the world, go home and love your family.”

The journalist later admitted that those words disturbed him. He had written articles about peace, justice, and humanity, yet he realized that he barely spoke kindly at home. Mother Teresa understood something profound: the future of the world is decided around dining tables, in kitchens, in ordinary conversations, and in the atmosphere of a home.

Today’s Gospel brings us into another home — the house of Martha and Mary. Jesus was not in the synagogue. He was not in the Temple. He was in a home. Christianity began to transform the world not from palaces but from homes where Christ was welcomed.

Martha welcomed Jesus through service. Mary welcomed Him through attention and presence. One prepared the meal; the other prepared the heart. Jesus did not reject Martha’s work. He simply reminded her that a home can become so busy serving that it forgets to listen, so full of activity that it loses intimacy.

And that is one of the great dangers in marriage.

A husband and wife can spend years building a house, paying bills, raising children, managing responsibilities — yet slowly stop truly seeing one another. Sometimes couples live under the same roof but inhabit different worlds.

There is an old story about a man who came home every evening exhausted from work. His little daughter would run to the door wanting to talk, but he always answered, “Later.” One night she fell asleep waiting for him beside the door. As he carried her to bed, he noticed a drawing in her hand. It showed their house with many windows — but no door. Underneath she had written: “Daddy lives here, but he never comes in.”

That story hurts because it is true for many relationships. People can physically be present yet emotionally absent.

The Gospel today invites this couple to build not merely a successful home, but a welcoming one — where people are heard, where silence is not coldness, where meals become communion, where prayer is natural, and where Christ is not treated as a visitor but as the unseen member of the family.

The Letter to the Hebrews says something astonishing: “Some have entertained angels without knowing it.” Sometimes God enters our lives disguised as interruption.

A crying child.

An elderly parent needing attention.

A lonely neighbour.

A guest arriving unexpectedly.

A spouse asking for time when we are tired.

Hospitality is not first about opening the door of the house. It is about opening the door of the heart.

There is a Jewish proverb that says: “A house grows warmer not by fire alone, but by the people welcomed into it.” That is deeply

Christian. The warmth of a home does not come from architecture, wealth, or decoration. It comes from forgiveness, patience, shared prayer, laughter, and presence.

Dear bride and groom, your greatest achievement in life may not be your careers or possessions. Years from now, people may not remember what furniture filled your house, but they will remember how they felt when they entered your home. They will remember whether peace lived there.

Children especially remember atmosphere more than words.

A priest once asked adults what they remembered most about childhood. One person answered, “I remember waking up at night and seeing my parents praying together.” Another said, “I remember that our home always had room for relatives who were struggling.” Someone else said, “I remember that no one ever left our table hungry.”

That is holiness in ordinary life.

Marriage is not simply two people loving each other privately. Christian marriage becomes a mission. Your home is called to become a small Gospel — a place where others encounter mercy, joy, stability, and God.

And when difficulties come — and they will — remember this: Christ still stands at the door.

The Book of Revelation says, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” The tragedy is not that Christ stops knocking. The tragedy is that sometimes homes become too noisy to hear Him.

Keep one chair for Christ in your marriage.  
Speak to Him together.  
Pray before major decisions.  
Forgive before sleeping.  
Protect family meals.  
Welcome the lonely.  
And never become too busy for one another.

A few years after Mother Teresa's death, a volunteer was asked what impressed him most while working with her. He replied: "The poor were not afraid when they entered her house." What a beautiful thing to say about any home.

May people who enter your home never be afraid — afraid of judgment, anger, humiliation, coldness, or rejection. May they encounter warmth. May they encounter kindness. May they encounter Christ.

And one day, after a lifetime of opening your door to others, may you hear Christ Himself open the door of heaven to you and say: "I was a stranger, and you welcomed me. Come, enter into the joy of your Lord."

## **PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL**

Gathered as one family in Christ, let us pray to God our Father, who calls every Christian home to become a place of welcome, faith, and peace.

1. For the Church throughout the world, that she may continue to open her doors to the lonely, the poor, and the searching, revealing the compassionate face of Christ to all. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For N. and N., united today in Holy Matrimony, that their home may always remain open to God's presence and become a place of prayer, forgiveness, joy, and generous hospitality. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For families who are burdened by conflict, loneliness, financial struggles, or division, that Christ may restore peace and tenderness within their homes. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For all guests, strangers, refugees, and those who feel unwelcome in society, that they may encounter homes and communities where they are treated with dignity and love. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For our departed family members and friends, especially those who taught us faith and kindness within the home, that they may now dwell forever in the house of the Father. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of love and hospitality,  
receive the prayers we place before You today.  
Make our homes reflections of Your mercy  
and our hearts dwelling places for Your Son,  
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 this newly married couple  
and for the sanctification of their future home,  
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 home.  
In Christian marriage  
You reveal the beauty of welcome,  
the holiness of daily life,  
and the grace of families  
who make room for Christ in their midst.

Through the love of this bride and groom,  
You desire to bless the world with peace,  
to shelter the lonely,  
to strengthen children in faith,  
and to make every home  
a sign of Your divine presence.

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 Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching,  
let us pray with confidence to the Father,  
asking that this new family may always remain united in love  
and rich in mercy toward all.

## **NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE**

Dear brothers and sisters,  
let us humbly pray to the Lord for these newly married spouses,  
who now begin their life together in Christ.

O God, who have brought N. and N.  
to the beginning of their married life,  
pour out the abundance of Your blessing upon them.

May their home always be open to Your presence  
and filled with kindness toward all who enter it.  
Grant them patience in trials, joy in daily life,  
wisdom in decisions, and tenderness in moments of weakness.

May they recognize You  
in one another,  
in strangers,  
in the poor,  
and in the needs of their family.

Bless them with the gift of children,  
that they may raise them in faith, hope, and love,  
and may their family become a living witness  
to the Gospel of Christ.

May their table always be surrounded by gratitude,  
their words marked by gentleness,  
and their hearts faithful to one another all their days.

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 home of this newly married couple become a dwelling place  
of reconciliation, gentle speech,  
and compassionate love for all who enter it.  
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.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

## SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Lord Jesus,  
You entered the home of Martha and Mary  
and transformed an ordinary house into a sacred place.  
Remain now in the home of this newly married couple.  
Sit at their table,  
walk through their joys and struggles,  
and teach them always to recognize You  
in one another and in every guest they welcome.  
May their love become a quiet light  
that leads others closer to You.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of Your Son, we pray, O Lord,  
for these newly married spouses.  
May the Sacrament they have received  
strengthen them to build a home  
marked by faith, generosity, and peace.  
Grant that Christ may remain at the centre of their family life  
and that their love may become a blessing for all they meet.  
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless your home with His presence  
and fill your hearts with enduring love. **Amen.**

May He grant that your doors remain open to those in need,  
your table rich in gratitude, and your family steadfast in faith. **Amen.**

May He bless you with children,  
surround you with faithful friends,  
and guide you safely through every season 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 the love you share,  
by the home you build, and by the welcome you offer to others.

## TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

A Christian home is not measured by how beautiful it looks  
from the outside, but by how deeply Christ is welcomed within it.

## 25. Mercy in Married Life - Micah 6:6–8; Lk 15:11–32

**Theme:** “Mercy: The Daily Homecoming of Marriage”

*Marriage is not sustained by perfection but by mercy — the grace to forgive, to return, to begin again, and to love one another even after wounds, failures, misunderstandings, and disappointments. In the Prodigal Son, we see not merely the story of one lost child returning home, but the story of every marriage that survives because someone chooses mercy over pride.*

### INTRODUCTION

In 1994, after the genocide in Rwanda, a woman stood in a prison line waiting to identify the man who had killed her husband and three children. When she finally saw him, the guards expected rage. Instead, she said quietly, “I cannot give back your life, but I refuse to let hatred bury mine.” Years later, she visited him in prison regularly. Mercy did not erase the wound — but it stopped the wound from becoming the future.

Every marriage eventually discovers this truth: love is beautiful on the wedding day, but mercy is what keeps love alive afterward. Romance begins a marriage; forgiveness sustains it. The prophet Micah asks a timeless question: what does God truly desire from us? Not grand offerings, but hearts that “act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with God.” And in the Gospel, Jesus shows us the Father whose mercy is always greater than failure.

Today, as this couple begins married life, they do not promise never to wound each other. They promise something deeper: never to stop returning to one another. Yet all of us know the moments when pride was stronger than compassion, when silence replaced tenderness, when judgment overcame mercy. Therefore, trusting in the God who always runs toward His children, let us acknowledge our sins and ask for His mercy.

### PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You never tire of welcoming home those who have wandered: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You teach us that mercy is greater than sacrifice: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You heal wounded hearts and restore broken relationships: **Lord, have mercy.**

### PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May Almighty God, who is rich in mercy and slow to anger, forgive us our pride, soften our hardened hearts, heal the wounds we have caused one another, and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

### COLLECT

O God,  
whose mercy restores what sin has wounded  
and whose love never ceases to seek the lost,  
look with kindness upon N. and N.,  
who today enter the covenant of Holy Matrimony.  
Teach them to forgive quickly,  
to love generously,  
and to walk humbly together before You,  
so that their home may become  
a living sign of Your compassion 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 little boy once broke his mother's favorite vase while playing indoors. Frightened, he hid under the bed all afternoon, convinced he would be punished. Evening came. Finally, his mother knelt beside the bed and whispered, "I am not waiting to punish you. I am waiting for you to come out." The boy later said, "That was the day I learned what love felt like."

That is the Gospel today.

The prodigal son rehearses his apology while walking home. He expects judgment. He prepares for rejection. But before he can even finish speaking, the father runs toward him. In the ancient world, dignified men did not run. Yet this father runs because mercy moves faster than shame.

And this is what marriage must become.

Not a courtroom where each spouse keeps score.  
Not a museum of old wounds carefully preserved.  
But a home where mercy runs faster than resentment.

One priest once asked an elderly couple celebrating sixty years of marriage, "What is the secret of your lasting love?" The wife answered immediately: "We never became experts in each other's faults." What wisdom. Some marriages die not because love disappears, but because criticism becomes the daily language of the home.

Micah says, "What does the Lord require of you?" Not perfection. Not flawless performance. But three simple things: act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.

Notice: "love mercy." Not merely practice mercy occasionally. Love it. Treasure it. Protect it.

Because every marriage will eventually need mercy.

There will be days when words come out wrong. Days when exhaustion replaces patience. Days when one feels unseen, misunderstood, or disappointed. The danger in marriage is not conflict; the danger is allowing pride to become more important than communion.

A husband once kept every angry message his wife had ever sent him. Years later she discovered the box and began to cry. But when she opened it, the papers were blank. He had erased the ink from every page. He told her, "I wanted to remember that we survived, not what we said." That is mercy. Mercy chooses healing over evidence.

The elder brother in the Gospel could not rejoice because he believed love had to be earned. Many marriages become elder-brother marriages — outwardly faithful but inwardly cold, where affection is replaced by silent accounting: "After all I have done for you..." But love cannot survive long where mercy disappears.

The happiest marriages are not the marriages without wounds. They are the marriages where two people keep coming home to each other.

Coming home after arguments.  
Coming home after misunderstandings.  
Coming home after disappointment.  
Coming home after weakness.

Because marriage is not the union of two perfect people. It is the covenant of two forgiven people.

At the end of her life, a woman married for fifty-two years was asked what she treasured most about her husband. She smiled and said, "He always made it easy to come back after I failed." What a sentence. What a vocation. What a sacrament.

N. and N., years from now you may forget the flowers, the music, even many details of this day. But never forget this: the holiest words in marriage are often not "I love you," but "I forgive you," "I understand," "Come back," and "Let us begin again."

Because every Christian marriage is meant to resemble the heart of the Father — a heart with the door always open and the light always on.

And perhaps one day, when people look at your life together, they will not simply say, "They loved each other." They will say something even greater:

"They showed each other mercy — and that is why their love endured."

## PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Trusting in the mercy of God, who always welcomes His children home, 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 reveal the compassionate face of the Father who forgives, heals, and restores, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. For N. and N., that their marriage may become a home where mercy is spoken gently, forgiveness is offered quickly, and love never grows tired, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
3. For married couples who are struggling with hurt, silence, betrayal, or disappointment, that God may heal wounded hearts and renew trust, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
4. For families divided by conflict and resentment, that reconciliation may triumph over pride and peace over bitterness, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
5. For our departed loved ones and for all who once taught us mercy by their example, that they may rejoice forever in the Father's house, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of mercy, You never cease to seek Your children with love. Hear the prayers we bring before You today and strengthen us always to walk in compassion and humility. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice,  
offered for a love sustained by mercy  
and strengthened by forgiveness,  
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 great mercy  
You never abandon those who stray from You,  
but continually call them back with tenderness and love.  
And in the Sacrament of Matrimony  
You teach us that faithful love is renewed  
not only in moments of joy,  
but also through patience, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

In N. and N. You reveal again  
the beauty of hearts willing to begin anew,  
reflecting the compassion of Christ,  
who loved His Church even unto the Cross.

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 Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

**Our Father...**

## NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE

Holy Father,  
who in Your mercy reconcile the world to Yourself through Christ,  
pour out the abundance of Your blessing upon N. and N.

Grant that they may always find in one another  
a refuge in sorrow, a companion in joy, and a partner in faith.

When wounded, may they forgive.  
When discouraged, may they strengthen one another.  
When successful, may they remain humble.  
And in every season of life,  
may they continue returning to each other with generous hearts.

Bless them with the gift of children,  
that their home may be filled with laughter, faith, and love,  
and may they wisely guide their children  
to know Your mercy and walk in Your ways.

May their marriage reveal to the world  
the tenderness of Christ  
and the enduring compassion of 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 homes of all married couples become places  
where mercy is stronger than anger  
and reconciliation stronger than division.  
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.  
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

### **SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION**

Love survives not because two people never fail,  
but because grace teaches them  
how to return to one another again and again.  
The Eucharist we have received is the sacrament of the God  
who never stops welcoming us home.  
May this couple become for each other  
a living reflection of that mercy.

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Having shared at the table of Your mercy,  
we pray, O Lord,  
that N. and N., strengthened by this holy Sacrament,  
may remain faithful in love, patient in trials,  
and generous in forgiveness,  
so that their marriage may always reveal the compassion of Christ.  
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **FINAL BLESSING**

May the God of infinite mercy keep your hearts gentle and faithful.  
**Amen.**

May Christ, who always welcomes the sinner home, teach you to  
forgive quickly and love deeply. **Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit fill your home with peace, tenderness, and  
enduring 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 marked with mercy,  
forgiveness, and faithful love.

### **TAKE-HOME THOUGHT**

A lasting marriage is not built by two people  
who never fail each other,  
but by two people who never stop returning,  
forgiving, and beginning again.