

76. Marriage and Ecological Responsibility

Genesis 2:15; Matthew 6:26–30

Theme: “A Love That Cultivates: Marriage as a Sacred Garden of Care, Trust, and Responsibility.”

INTRODUCTION

In a small village devastated by drought, an elderly couple was once asked the secret of their fifty years together. The old man quietly pointed to a tree standing before their house. “When we got married,” he said, “that tree was no taller than our knees. Every morning, one of us carried water to it. Some days I did it; some days she did. During storms we tied it upright; during dry seasons we protected its roots. We grew old together—but so did the tree.” Today that tree shelters the entire village from the burning sun.

Marriage is much like that tree. Love is never simply found; it is cultivated. In the first reading, God places humanity in the garden “to till it and keep it.” Creation is not a possession to exploit, but a gift entrusted to our care. And in the Gospel, Jesus points to the birds of the air and the lilies of the field, teaching us that creation itself speaks of God’s tenderness and providence. A married couple is called not only to care for each other, but also to become guardians of life, protectors of beauty, and witnesses that love grows where care is constant.

Yet there are times when we have treated relationships carelessly, ignored the cry of creation, or trusted more in anxiety than in God’s providence. Therefore, with humble hearts, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord for mercy and healing.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You planted humanity in the garden of creation and entrusted the earth to our loving care: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You teach us through the birds of the sky and the flowers of the field to trust in the Father’s providence:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, You call married couples to cultivate love faithfully and to become signs of hope for the world: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us for the times we have wounded love,
neglected creation, and failed to trust in His providence,
and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

O God, who created the garden of the world
as a sign of Your wisdom and love,
and who call husband and wife to cultivate together the gifts of life,
faith, and compassion,
look with kindness upon N. and N.,
joined today in the covenant of marriage.
Grant that, trusting always in Your providence,
they may nurture one another with patience,
protect the beauty of creation with grateful hearts,
and become for the world a living witness of faithful and fruitful 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

Many years ago, after a violent forest fire in Yellowstone National Park, rangers walked through the ashes searching for surviving wildlife. Near the base of a charred tree, one ranger gently struck what looked like a mound of blackened earth with a stick. To his surprise, three tiny birds fluttered out from beneath the ashes. Underneath the dead mother bird's wings, the chicks had survived. The mother had remained in place while the fire consumed her, protecting life with her own body.

That is love.

Love is not merely emotion, romance, or attraction. Real love shelters. Real love protects. Real love remains faithful when storms come. And this is exactly what Christian marriage is called to become: a shelter where life is protected, nurtured, and allowed to flourish.

The first reading from Genesis tells us that God placed humanity in the garden "to till it and keep it." Notice those two words carefully: *to till* and *to keep*. Humanity was never given permission to dominate recklessly. The garden was entrusted to human hands as something sacred. The earth was never meant to become a battlefield of greed, but a home of stewardship.

And marriage mirrors that same responsibility.

A marriage is also a garden entrusted by God. It does not remain beautiful automatically. Gardens become deserts when neglected. Flowers die when unattended. Even the richest soil becomes barren

without care. A husband and wife are therefore not simply owners of a relationship; they are caretakers of something holy.

There is an old story of a monk who lived near a river. Every morning he would fill two clay pots with water. One pot was perfect; the other had a crack and leaked along the path. For years the cracked pot felt ashamed because it delivered only half the water. One day the monk smiled and said, "Have you noticed the flowers growing along your side of the road? I planted seeds there because I knew about your weakness." What the pot considered failure had become beauty.

Marriage teaches the same lesson. No husband is perfect. No wife is perfect. There will be cracks, wounds, misunderstandings, and weaknesses. But when love is patient, even human weakness can water flowers along the road. The strongest marriages are not those without flaws, but those where grace transforms flaws into compassion.

Then Jesus, in today's Gospel, points us toward the birds of the sky and the lilies of the field. He invites us to trust. Anxiety is one of the greatest threats to modern marriage. Couples worry about finances, careers, security, status, and the future. Yet Jesus reminds us that creation itself survives because it rests in God's providence.

A farmer once buried his entire season's harvest seed during a year of severe drought. His neighbours laughed at him. "Why waste good seed when no rain is coming?" they asked. The farmer replied, "If I stop planting because of fear, then the drought has already defeated me." Weeks later the rains came, and his fields alone turned green.

Marriage always requires this courage to plant in hope.

Every act of forgiveness is a seed. Every sacrifice is a seed. Every child welcomed with love is a seed. Every meal shared in gratitude is a seed. Every act of care for creation is a seed. And seeds always demand faith before they bear fruit.

Today our world suffers not only from environmental destruction, but also from relational destruction. Forests disappear because of greed; families collapse because of selfishness. Rivers become polluted because people take without gratitude; relationships become polluted when people love without responsibility.

Christian marriage is therefore deeply prophetic. A faithful couple proclaims to the world that lasting love is possible. A generous family reminds society that life is sacred. A home that respects creation becomes a witness that gratitude is holier than consumption.

There is a Jewish proverb that says: “Every person should plant a tree whose shade they may never sit under.” That is exactly what marriage is. Husband and wife plant seeds whose fruits future generations may enjoy. Their tenderness creates emotional shelter for children. Their faithfulness becomes shade for the weary. Their sacrifices become hope for a wounded world.

And so, dear N. and N., today God entrusts a garden to you. Protect it. Water it. Forgive within it. Laugh within it. Pray within it. Welcome life within it. And never allow fear, selfishness, or indifference to poison its soil. For one day, many people may rest beneath the shade of the love you begin today.

There is a story told of an old couple who had spent sixty years together. Shortly before the wife died, a grandchild asked her, “What

kept your marriage alive for so long?” The grandmother pointed to a worn wooden table in the kitchen. “Every scratch on that table,” she said, “came from family meals, tears, celebrations, prayers, and reconciliations. We never protected the furniture more than we protected the family gathered around it.” And that is the Gospel in one sentence.

The world teaches people to preserve possessions. Christ teaches us to preserve relationships. The world measures wealth by what we consume. God measures wealth by what we nurture.

May your marriage become like a flourishing tree planted by living waters—deeply rooted in God, sheltering others in love, and bearing fruit that will bless generations yet unborn. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Mindful that God entrusts both love and creation to our care, let us now bring our prayers before Him with confidence and trust.

1. For the Church throughout the world: that she may continue to proclaim the sacred dignity of marriage and inspire humanity to care responsibly for creation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For N. and N.: that their marriage may become a living garden of faith, tenderness, forgiveness, and generosity, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For families burdened by anxiety, division, or hardship: that they may rediscover trust in God’s providence and the healing power of love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For leaders of nations and all entrusted with the care of the environment: that they may protect the earth wisely for future generations, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all gathered here today, and especially for future generations: that we may learn to cherish both human relationships and the beauty of creation as sacred gifts from God, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, You clothe the lilies of the field and sustain the birds of the sky.
Hear the prayers we place before You today, and teach us always to trust in Your loving providence.
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 care entrusted to us in creation, may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

O Lord, receive these gifts placed upon Your altar on this joyful wedding day, and grant that through this sacred offering N. and N. may learn to give themselves to one another with the same faithful generosity with which You sustain all creation.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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 the beauty of the earth,
filled the world with signs of Your goodness,
and entrusted creation to human hands
so that it might be protected with reverence and gratitude.

And in the covenant of marriage
You reveal the mystery of faithful love,
calling husband and wife
to cultivate together a home of trust, generosity, and peace.
Through their mutual self-giving,
You allow love to bear fruit, families to flourish,
and future generations to discover hope.

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

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command
and formed by divine teaching,
let us pray with confidence to the Father
who cares for us more tenderly
than the birds of the sky or the flowers of the field:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord
for these newly married spouses,
that He who has brought them together today
may continue to strengthen their covenant of love.

Holy Father,
creator of heaven and earth,
You formed man and woman in Your image
and blessed their union from the beginning.
Look with kindness upon N. and N.,
who come before You today
to begin their life together in the Sacrament of Marriage.

Pour out upon them the grace of the Holy Spirit,
that their love may remain faithful in times of joy and trial,
patient in moments of weakness,
and generous in serving one another.

Teach them to cultivate their home
as a sacred garden of peace,
where prayer is cherished,
forgiveness is freely given,
and every person is welcomed with compassion.

May they learn from the beauty of creation
to live with gratitude rather than selfishness,
and may their marriage become a shelter of hope
for all who enter their home.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may lovingly receive them,
raise them in wisdom and faith,
and teach them to honour both human life and the world You have
made.

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 newly married couple
become instruments of peace within their home
and careful guardians of the harmony of creation.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who nourishes all creation
and teaches us to trust in the Father's loving care.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love grows quietly.
Like roots beneath the earth,
it deepens unseen before it bears fruit.

Today God has planted a seed in the hearts of N. and N.—
a covenant meant to shelter life,
heal wounds,
and reflect His own faithful love.

May their home become a place
where gratitude is stronger than greed,
where prayer is deeper than anxiety,
and where future generations discover
that true happiness is found not in possessing the world,
but in caring for it together.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at this sacred table,
we thank You, Lord,
for nourishing us with the Bread of Life.

Grant that N. and N.,
strengthened by this heavenly sacrament,
may continue to cultivate a marriage
rooted in faith,
fruitful in love,
and attentive to the care of all You have created.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord,
who entrusted the garden of creation to human care,
bless you and keep you faithful in love. **Amen.**

May He grant that your home
may always be filled with trust, gratitude, forgiveness, and peace.
Amen.

May He make your marriage
a shelter for the weary,
a joy for your families,
and a sign of hope for the world. **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 cultivating love faithfully,
protecting the beauty of creation,
and serving one another with joyful hearts.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A good marriage is like a well-tended garden: it flourishes not
because life is perfect, but because love never stops caring.”

77. Welcoming Others Through Family Life

Rom 15:5–7; Lk 14:12–14

Theme: “A Home with an Open Door”

Christian marriage is not only about two people finding happiness together; it is about building a home where others experience welcome, dignity, healing, and God’s tenderness. In Romans, Paul urges believers to “welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you.” In the Gospel, Jesus asks us to invite not only those who can repay us, but especially those who are forgotten and left out. Today, N. and N. are called to build not merely a house, but a table where love is shared freely.

INTRODUCTION

A traveller once arrived late at night in a small village during a storm. Every house he approached had a reason to keep the door shut: “No space.” “Too late.” “Try elsewhere.” Finally, one poor widow opened her tiny home. She had little food and only one dry blanket, yet she shared both. Years later, when people spoke of that village, no one remembered the larger houses. They remembered the small house with the open door. Greatness is rarely measured by how much we own, but by how many people find warmth because we exist.

Today, N. and N. stand before God to begin such a home. Marriage is not simply the joining of two hearts; it is the creation of a space where Christ Himself will be welcomed in the stranger, the weary, the lonely, the child, the elderly, the friend, and even the difficult guest. A Christian family becomes holy not because it is perfect, but because its doors, hearts, and table remain open.

As we gather around this altar, we also recognize the moments when we have closed our hearts, withheld kindness, or loved only when it was convenient. Therefore, with humility and trust, let us ask the Lord for mercy and forgiveness.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You welcomed sinners and ate with those whom others rejected: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You teach us to love without expecting reward: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You call every Christian family to become a light of hospitality and peace: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who opens His heart to all who seek Him, forgive us for the times we failed to welcome others with generosity and love, heal the selfishness that narrows our hearts, strengthen us in charity and communion, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

O God,
who in your loving providence
have called N. and N.
to the covenant of Christian marriage,
grant that their home may become
a dwelling of welcome, compassion, and joyful generosity.
Teach them to recognize your presence
in every person they encounter,
so that, united in love,
they may reflect the hospitality of Christ to 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 famous violinist once travelled by train carrying his precious instrument. At one station, an old porter noticed the case and asked shyly, “Sir, is that really worth a fortune?” The musician smiled and replied, “Only when it is played.”

A violin locked away in a box fulfills nothing. Its beauty exists for others.

Marriage is like that. Love hidden, guarded, and self-protective slowly becomes lifeless. But love shared — through welcome, generosity, forgiveness, meals, listening, patience, and kindness — becomes music in the world.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus says something surprising. When you host a banquet, do not invite only those who can repay you. Invite those who cannot give anything back. The world usually calculates relationships by benefit: “What do I gain?” Jesus changes the question completely: “Whom can I love freely?”

That is the heart of Christian marriage.

St. Paul tells us in Romans: “Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you.” Christ did not welcome us because we were perfect. He welcomed us when we were weak, wounded, sinful, and lost. Therefore, every Christian home is called to become an extension of Christ’s welcome.

A little boy once asked his grandmother, “Why do you always cook extra food when guests come?” She answered, “Because love should never arrive at a table and find nothing waiting.” That is the Gospel in one sentence.

N. and N., your marriage will not be remembered mainly for the beauty of today’s ceremony. Years from now, people may not remember the flowers or the photographs. But they will remember how they felt in your presence. Did they feel judged or accepted? Did they find peace in your home? Did your marriage make room for others?

There will be moments when keeping the door open will not be easy. Hospitality is beautiful in theory but demanding in reality. Some guests arrive with gratitude; others arrive with burdens. Some relationships bring joy; others test patience.

There is an old story about a monastery known throughout the region for its peace. Visitors constantly arrived asking the monks, “What is your secret?” Finally, the abbot answered, “Everyone here believes the other person may be Christ in disguise.” Imagine what happens to a marriage when husband and wife begin to see Christ in one another — especially on difficult days.

To welcome another person is to say: “Your life matters. You are not invisible. There is room for you.” And that begins first between the bride and groom themselves. The greatest hospitality of marriage is not offered to strangers but to one another every single day — especially after disappointment, failure, exhaustion, misunderstandings, and wounds.

The Eucharist we celebrate today is itself a banquet. God invites us though we can never repay Him. At this altar, heaven keeps an open table for humanity. And from this altar, N. and N. are sent to make their marriage another small reflection of that divine table.

Years ago, after a terrible flood, rescue workers entered a ruined village. One house still stood with a lantern burning outside. Inside was a family serving soup to anyone who entered — strangers, neighbours, children, even animals rescued from the waters. One exhausted rescuer later said, “That house looked like hope itself.”

N. and N., may your marriage become such a house: a place where faith is alive, where forgiveness is quicker than anger, where laughter is not rare, where the lonely are noticed, where children are cherished, where the poor are remembered, where friends find rest, and where Christ always finds the door open.

Because in the end, the most beautiful homes are not the ones with the finest walls, but the ones with the widest hearts.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Gathered as one family in Christ, and trusting in the Lord who welcomes all people with love, let us present our prayers to the Father.

1. For the Church:

that she may always be a welcoming home for the poor, the forgotten, and all who seek God’s mercy, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For N. and N.:

that their marriage may become a living witness of generosity, hospitality, patience, and joyful love, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

3. For families throughout the world:

that their homes may be places of forgiveness, understanding, and peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For those who feel excluded or lonely:

that they may encounter hearts and homes that welcome them with compassion and dignity, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

5. For all gathered here:

that nourished by the Eucharist, we may reflect Christ’s openness and kindness in our daily lives, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Father of love and communion,

receive these prayers we place before you today.

Teach us to welcome one another as Christ has welcomed us, and lead us always in the way of generous love.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, offered for N. and N.,

whose marriage is called to become a sign of Christ’s generous love and welcome, 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 home.
In Christian marriage you reveal
the generous love of Christ,
who welcomes humanity to the banquet of salvation
and never turns away those who seek Him.

Today you bless N. and N.,
that their family life may reflect your compassion,
their table may become a place of peace and sharing,
and their home a shelter of kindness and joy.

Through Christ our Lord,
through whom the angels praise your majesty,
as they rejoice forever in your presence.
With them we also praise your name and joyfully proclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
let us pray to the Father
whose love gathers all people into one family.

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for N. and N.,
who come today to begin their married life in Christ.

Holy Father, creator of all goodness,
pour out your blessing upon these your servants, N. and N.
United today in the covenant of marriage,

may they become for one another
a refuge of peace, strength, and joy.
Grant that their home may always remain open
to those in need of kindness and encouragement.
Teach them to welcome one another daily with patience,
tenderness, and mercy,
so that their love may deepen through every season of life.

Bless them with the gift of children;
grant that they may lovingly raise them in faith, wisdom,
and compassion,
and help them to build a family
that reflects the warmth of your Kingdom.

In moments of prosperity, keep them grateful;
in difficulties, keep them united;
in forgiveness, keep them humble;
and in all things, keep them close to Christ.

May they one day rejoice forever in 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 homes of your faithful become places of reconciliation,
welcome, and healing for all who enter them.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who welcomes us to the banquet of eternal life and
teaches us to love with generous hearts.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Every Eucharist ends with a sending.
We are fed at the table of Christ
so that we may become nourishment for others.
Today N. and N. begin a marriage
that is meant to be more than companionship;
it is meant to become hospitality in action,
love made visible, and faith lived around an open table.
May the Body of Christ received today
shape their home into a place
where many hearts will one day find rest.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of your Son,
we ask you, Lord,
to strengthen N. and N. in the grace of their marriage,
so that nourished by this heavenly sacrament,
they may persevere in faithful love,
welcome others with generous hearts,
and become witnesses of Christ's compassion in the world.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May He make your home a place of joy and peace.
May He teach you to recognize His presence in one another and in
all who come to you in need.
May He bless your family with enduring love, generous hearts, and
steadfast faith.

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

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by the openness of your hearts and
the generosity of your lives.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

A Christian marriage becomes holy
when its love does not stop with two people,
but becomes a welcome through which
many others encounter Christ.

78. Christian Love in an Individualistic Culture

Phil 2:1–4; Jn 13:34–35

Theme: “Love That Makes Room for the Other”

In a culture that often says, “Protect yourself first,” Christian marriage becomes a living witness that true joy is found in self-giving love. The couple is called not merely to live together, but to empty themselves for one another in the spirit of Christ, so that their home may become a sign of God’s love in a fragmented and individualistic world.

INTRODUCTION

A traveller once asked an old monk, “What is the saddest sentence in the world?” The monk replied, “I have no room for you.” Wars begin there. Families break there. Friendships die there. Hearts grow cold there. Yet the Gospel begins with the opposite: “Come in. Sit down. You belong.” Every human being longs for a place where they are received, chosen, and loved without calculation.

Today, as N. and N. stand before God, they proclaim something deeply countercultural. In a world that often teaches people to build walls around themselves, they choose to build a home within each other. Saint Paul urges us: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition... regard others as more important than yourselves.” And Jesus gives the commandment that defines Christian marriage: “Love one another as I have loved you.”

But love is not always easy. At times we close our hearts, insist on our own way, or fail to notice another’s pain. Therefore, before we celebrate these sacred mysteries, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord to soften our hearts, so that this marriage may reflect the generous and selfless love of Christ.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you loved us not from a distance but by giving yourself completely: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, you call husbands and wives to place one another before themselves: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you make Christian homes signs of unity in a divided world: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us every moment of selfishness,
hardness of heart,
and failure to love as Christ has loved us,
heal what divides us,
deepen within us the grace of self-giving love,
and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

O God, who revealed in Christ
that true greatness is found in humble and selfless love,
look kindly upon your servants N. and N.,
who today enter the covenant of Holy Matrimony.
Teach them to seek not their own advantage
but each other’s good, that their marriage may become
a living witness to the love of Christ for his Church.
Grant that their home may be a place of welcome,
forgiveness, and joy,
where faith is nurtured and love made visible each day.
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 an elderly man who visited his wife every morning in a care home. She no longer recognized him because of advanced memory loss. One day the nurse asked, “Why do you still come every day when she doesn’t even know who you are?” The old man smiled gently and replied, “Because I still know who she is.”

That is love.

Not love as convenience.

Not love as emotion alone.

But love as faithful self-gift.

The world today often speaks a different language. It says: “Protect yourself first. Think about your needs first. Keep your options open. Leave when things become difficult.” Modern culture frequently trains people to ask, “What am I getting out of this?” But the Gospel asks another question entirely: “Whom am I willing to give myself to?”

Saint Paul, in the Letter to the Philippians, speaks almost directly to married couples: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition.” That single line could save marriages, families, even societies. Most conflicts do not begin because love disappeared overnight. They begin when the word “we” quietly becomes “me.”

A married couple once celebrated sixty years together. Someone asked the husband the secret of their long marriage. He answered, “We came from a generation that repaired things instead of replacing them.” What wisdom there is in that sentence. Today phones are replaced, furniture is replaced, commitments are replaced, and sadly

even relationships are sometimes treated as disposable. But Christian marriage declares that people are never disposable.

Jesus raises love to an astonishing level when He says: “Love one another as I have loved you.” How did He love? Patiently. Sacrificially. Faithfully. On the Cross, Christ did not ask, “What do I receive?” but “What can I give?” Marriage becomes holy precisely there — not merely in romance, but in sacrifice offered with tenderness.

N. and N., today you are promising something beautiful but demanding. There will be days of laughter and days of silence; days when understanding comes easily and days when misunderstanding hurts deeply. Real love is not proven in perfect moments but in imperfect moments carried with grace.

There is a Jewish story about two brothers who farmed neighbouring fields. One was married with many children; the other was single. During harvest each secretly carried sacks of grain at night into the other’s barn. The married brother thought, “My brother is alone; he needs more for the future.” The single brother thought, “My brother has a family to feed; he needs more.” One night they met in the middle carrying grain for each other — and according to the story, that place became holy ground.

That is what Christian love looks like: each trying not to take more, but to give more.

The Gospel today says the world will recognize Christians not by power, wealth, or success, but by love. The greatest sermon your marriage will ever preach will not be spoken from a microphone. It

will be spoken in ordinary moments — in patience after an argument, in forgiveness after failure, in staying when leaving would be easier, in listening when tired, in praying together when life becomes heavy.

A child once drew a picture of home at school. The teacher noticed there were no walls in the drawing and asked why. The child answered, “Because home is where nobody shuts you out.”

N. and N., may your marriage become exactly that: a place where no one is shut out, where Christ is always welcomed, where love makes room for the other, and where the world catches a glimpse of heaven through the way you love each other.

And when many years from now people ask what made your marriage beautiful, may the answer not simply be, “They loved each other,” but rather, “They loved each other the way Christ loved them.”

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Gathered in joy as N. and N. begin their married life in Christ, let us present our prayers to God, whose love teaches us to live not for ourselves alone but for one another.

1. For the Church, that she may continue to witness to the selfless love of Christ in a world marked by division and individualism, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For N. and N., that their marriage may be rooted in humility, patience, forgiveness, and joyful sacrifice, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples experiencing difficulty, loneliness, or misunderstanding, that they may rediscover healing and hope through grace and mutual love, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

4. For families throughout the world, that homes may become places of welcome, peace, and compassion where no one feels rejected or unloved, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For all gathered here, that we may grow in the courage to place others before ourselves and so reflect the love of Christ in daily life, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,
you revealed your love through your Son
who gave himself completely for us.
Hear the prayers we place before you today,
and make us faithful witnesses of your compassionate 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 covenant of love
begun today by N. and N.,
and for the grace to live not selfishly but selflessly 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 in love,
that they might no longer live for themselves alone
but become one heart and one life in mutual self-giving.
In Christ your Son,
you revealed that love reaches its fullness
not in seeking one's own advantage
but in humble sacrifice for the good of another.

Today you bless N. and N.,
who before your altar freely pledge themselves to one another.
You call them to mirror the faithful love of Christ for his Church,
to build a home marked by tenderness and forgiveness,
and to become a sign of hope
in a world often wounded by isolation and division.
And so, with the Angels and all the Saints,
we praise you, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, let us pray
as children of the one Father, asking that this new family may always
be strengthened in unity, forgiveness, and selfless love.

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for these newly married spouses,
that he who has brought them together today
may continue to deepen their union in Christ.

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

Grant that they may never be imprisoned by selfishness
but always make room in their hearts for one another.
Teach them to speak with kindness,
to listen with patience,
to forgive quickly,
and to carry each other's burdens with tenderness.

May their home become a refuge of peace,
a school of faith,
and a place where Christ is welcomed each day.
In moments of joy, keep them grateful;
in moments of suffering, keep them united;
and in all circumstances, make their love steadfast and faithful.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may lovingly welcome new life,
raise their children in wisdom and compassion,
and together grow as a family rooted in your love.

Grant that, after a long and blessed life together,
they may come 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.
May this new marriage become a living witness
that peace grows wherever hearts choose
understanding over selfishness
and forgiveness over pride.
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 —
blessed also are N. and N.,
who today begin their life together
nourished by the One
whose love was poured out completely for others.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love becomes believable when it becomes visible.
Today Christ has given himself again in the Eucharist —
completely, faithfully, without reserve.
This is the love N. and N.
are called to share with one another each day:
a love that listens, forgives, sacrifices, and remains.
May their marriage always draw strength from this altar,
where heaven teaches earth how to love.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of your love, we pray, O Lord,
that N. and N., strengthened by the Body and Blood of Christ,
may remain united in mutual service and enduring affection.
Teach them to seek each other's good with generous hearts,
so that their marriage may shine as a witness to the Gospel
in the midst of the world.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May he teach you to love not only in words but in sacrifice and truth.
May he make your home a place of welcome, healing, and peace.
May he strengthen you in times of trial,
deepen your joy in times of blessing,
and keep your hearts always united in Christ.
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 way you love one another and
by the room you make in your hearts for others.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“The strongest marriages are not built by two people thinking alike,
but by two people learning daily to love alike — as Christ loved.”

79. Rediscovering Romance Through Faith

Song of Songs 2:10–13; John 15:9–11

Theme: “Love That Keeps Blooming: Rediscovering Romance Through Faith”

INTRODUCTION

A man once visited his elderly wife in a care home every single morning at 7:00 a.m. One day a nurse asked him, “Does your wife still recognize you?” He smiled gently and replied, “No... she no longer knows who I am. But I still know who she is.” Romance had aged, memories had faded, beauty had changed—but love had become deeper than emotion. It had become fidelity. It had become a daily choice.

The readings today speak of that kind of love. In the Song of Songs, love arrives like springtime after winter: “Arise, my beloved, and come!” In the Gospel, Jesus reveals the secret that keeps love alive: “Remain in my love.” Romance begins with attraction, but it survives through abiding. Feelings may rise and fall like seasons, but love rooted in God keeps blooming again and again.

Yet all of us know that we do not always remain faithful to love. We sometimes wound one another through impatience, selfishness, forgetfulness, or pride. Therefore, as we prepare to celebrate these sacred mysteries and witness the covenant of marriage, let us ask the Lord for mercy and healing.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, you call us to remain in your love even when affection grows tired or weak: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, you renew human hearts like spring after winter and restore joy to weary souls: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you teach us that lasting romance is born from faithfulness and sacrifice: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God,
who renews love when hearts grow weary,
heal the wounds caused by selfishness and fear,
restore in us the joy of loving faithfully,
and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God,
who teach us through your Son
that true joy is found in remaining in your love,
look with kindness upon N. and N.,
who come before your altar today.
May their marriage always bloom with tenderness, fidelity,
forgiveness, and delight in one another,
so that through every season of life
they may reveal the beauty of your faithful love to 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

There is an old violin in a museum in Cremona, Italy. Experts say it is worth millions, not because it is new, but because for centuries master musicians kept playing it. The wood absorbed music, touch, discipline, and care. A violin hidden in a box eventually cracks in silence. But one continually played becomes richer with age. Marriage is like that.

Many people think romance survives because of excitement, beauty, travel, gifts, or perfect compatibility. But Jesus says something deeper today: **“Remain in my love.”**

Not visit it occasionally.

Not return to it only when convenient.

Remain.

The Song of Songs is overflowing with passion and delight: “Arise, my beloved, and come!” God is not embarrassed by romance. He created it. The sparkle in the eyes, the nervous excitement, the longing to be together—these are holy gifts. But every married couple eventually discovers that romance cannot survive on emotion alone. Feelings are beautiful servants but terrible foundations.

A young husband once complained to an elderly priest, “Father, I think I married the wrong person. We are no longer in love.” The priest quietly asked him, “Then love her.” The man replied, “No, Father, you don’t understand. The feeling is gone.” The priest answered, “That is exactly when love begins.”

That is the difference between modern romance and Christian love. The world says love is something you fall into. Christ says love is something you remain in. And remaining is hard.

There will be ordinary days. Bills. Fatigue. Misunderstandings. Crying children. Illness. Silence after arguments. Moments when one feels unnoticed. Marriage does not fail because couples stop loving each other; often it fails because they stop nurturing the small things that keep love alive.

A woman once found a note in her lunchbox from her husband after thirty years of marriage. It simply said: “Still my favourite person.” She cried—not because the words were poetic, but because after decades, he still chose tenderness.

Romance is rarely destroyed by one dramatic moment. It usually dies from neglect. Love fades when gratitude disappears. When prayer disappears. When listening disappears. When couples stop seeing each other with wonder.

That is why Jesus says:

“Remain in my love... so that your joy may be complete.”

Notice He does not say happiness. Happiness depends on circumstances. Joy survives circumstances. Joy can exist even in hospitals, even in financial struggle, even beside a grave—because joy is rooted in knowing: “I am loved, and I will not be abandoned.”

Faith keeps romance alive because faith reminds us that the person before us is never merely “mine.” They belong first to God. And when spouses begin praying for one another instead of merely arguing

with one another, something changes. Grace enters. Pride softens. Hearts reopen.

A couple married for fifty-five years were asked the secret of their marriage. The wife answered, “We came from a generation that repaired things instead of replacing them.”

That is the Gospel in one sentence.

Today, N. and N., you are not simply celebrating love as a feeling. You are entering a covenant where romance becomes sacred because it is sustained by grace. Hold hands often. Laugh easily. Apologize quickly. Pray daily. Never become strangers living in the same house. Continue courting each other long after today.

Because the most beautiful marriages are not those without storms. They are those where two people keep returning to one another after every storm.

And let me end with this.

An elderly husband was once asked, “After all these years, what do you still see when you look at your wife?” He smiled and said, “Every version of her at once—the young girl I married, the mother of our children, the woman who suffered beside me, the friend who stayed... and the face of God’s faithfulness.”

That is Christian romance.

Not merely hearts beating faster—
but two souls learning, year after year,
how to remain in love.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrating God’s faithful love revealed in Christ and mirrored in Christian marriage, let us now place our prayers before the Father.

1. For the Church throughout the world, that she may continue to proclaim the beauty of faithful love, forgiveness, and lifelong commitment, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. For N. and N., that their love may continually bloom through prayer, tenderness, patience, and joyful fidelity, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
3. For married couples who are struggling, wounded, or distant from one another, that God may renew in them the grace of reconciliation and hope, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
4. For families throughout the world, that homes may become places where affection, faith, and mercy are daily practiced, 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 love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of love and joy,
hear the prayers we place before you today.
May the love you have planted in human hearts
always find its strength and fulfillment in you.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters,
that this sacrifice, which celebrates the love of Christ
that never fades,
and the covenant of N. and N.
who desire to remain faithful through every season of life,
may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

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

For in your wisdom and love
you created man and woman for one another,
so that in the covenant of marriage
they might reflect the enduring love of Christ for his Church.

In the tenderness of human affection,
in the joy of companionship, in forgiveness after failure,
and in fidelity through changing seasons,
you reveal the beauty of your divine love.

You teach us that love is not merely a passing emotion,
but a grace that deepens through sacrifice, patience, and trust.
And through your Son, Jesus Christ,
you invite married couples to remain in your love,
so that their joy may be complete.
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
whose faithful love never abandons his children
and whose grace sustains every Christian marriage.

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for N. and N.,
who come today to begin their married life at the altar of God.
Holy Father, creator of love and source of lasting joy,
pour out the grace of your blessing upon N. and N.
May they remain in one another's hearts
through every season of life.
When joy overflows, may they be grateful;
when trials come, may they remain faithful;
when misunderstandings arise,
may forgiveness restore them quickly.
Renew their romance through prayer, tenderness,
and daily acts of love.
May they never cease to delight in one another,
to speak kindly, to listen patiently, and to walk together in faith.
Bless their home with peace and laughter.
May they be blessed with children,
whom they may raise with wisdom, faith, and compassion.
Grant that all who enter their home
may experience welcome, warmth, and hope.
And after a long and blessed life together,
may they come with all the saints
to the eternal wedding feast of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you.
Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.
May the peace you give also dwell within the hearts of N. and N.,
so that their love may remain strong through every season of life,
and their home may become a refuge of tenderness and
reconciliation.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
who teaches us to remain in his love
and fills faithful hearts with lasting joy.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love remains beautiful when it remains rooted in Christ.
Today, N. and N. have promised one another fidelity,
but the deeper promise is God's promise to remain with them.
The romance that begins today
is called to mature into companionship, sacrifice, forgiveness,
laughter, and holiness.
For love that prays together never grows old before God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at your table, O Lord,
we pray that N. and N.
may always remain in the love of Christ
which they have celebrated in this sacrament.
Renew their hearts whenever they grow weary,
deepen their joy through faithful living,
and make their home a sign of your enduring presence.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless your love
so that it may continue to bloom through every season of life. **Amen.**
May he strengthen you in fidelity,
gentleness, forgiveness, and joy. **Amen.**
May your home be filled with faith, laughter, peace, and the blessing
of children. **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 by keeping alive the sacred romance
that reflects God's faithful heart.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

Romance lasts not because love never changes,
but because two people keep choosing each other
in the presence of God.

80. Marriage and the Wisdom of the Saints

Wis 6:12–16; Mt 7:24–27

Theme: “Building a Marriage on Wisdom that Endures the Storms.”

INTRODUCTION

In the Italian town of Assisi, visitors still walk through the tiny chapel where Saint Francis once rebuilt broken stones with his own hands. People thought he was merely repairing a ruined building. But Francis later understood that God was asking him to rebuild lives, hearts, and relationships. Saints are remembered not because they avoided hardship, but because they learned how to build on foundations that could survive hardship.

Today the Book of Wisdom tells us that true wisdom is not distant or hidden; she “hastens to make herself known.” And Jesus, in the Gospel, speaks of the wise man who built his house upon rock. Marriage is not built merely on attraction, success, romance, or convenience. It is built slowly, prayerfully, and daily—through truth, sacrifice, forgiveness, and fidelity. The saints teach us that holiness is not perfection without struggle; holiness is love that remains faithful through struggle.

As we gather for this sacred celebration, we recognize that at times we have built parts of our lives on sand—on pride, impatience, selfishness, or fear rather than on the wisdom of God. And so, trusting in the mercy of the Lord who alone can strengthen every fragile heart, let us acknowledge our sins and prepare ourselves to celebrate these sacred mysteries.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You are the Wisdom of the Father, teaching us to build our lives upon the rock of truth and love: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You remain faithful even in the storms, and You call husbands and wives to persevere in covenant love:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, You strengthen the weak, heal the wounded, and make holy those who trust in You: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who is the firm foundation of every faithful home, forgive us our sins, strengthen us with heavenly wisdom, heal whatever is fragile within us, and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God, source of all wisdom and enduring love,
You teach us through Your Son
that only what is built upon You can withstand the storms of life.
Grant that these your servants,
joined today in the covenant of Matrimony,
may build their home upon faith, humility, patience, and charity,
so that, strengthened by Your grace
and inspired by the witness of the saints,
they may persevere in joy and trial alike
and become for the world a living sign of Your faithful love.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A few years ago, after a devastating earthquake in Italy, rescuers noticed something remarkable. Entire streets had collapsed, but one small monastery still stood almost untouched. Engineers later discovered why: centuries earlier, the monks who built it had placed deep stones beneath the foundation and connected the walls with hidden supports. The strength of the building was not in what people could see—it was in what had been laid deep underground.

That is exactly what Jesus speaks about today.

“The wise man built his house upon rock.”

A wedding day is beautiful. Flowers are beautiful. Music is beautiful. Emotions are beautiful. But none of these can hold a marriage together when storms arrive. And storms do come. Illness comes. Financial strain comes. Misunderstandings come. Weariness comes. Sometimes silence enters a home where laughter once lived.

The question is not whether storms will come. The question is: *What foundation has been laid beneath the marriage?*

The saints understood this deeply.

Saint Monica prayed for years through disappointment and tears before seeing the conversion of her husband and son Augustine. Saint Louis and Saint Zélie Martin—the parents of Saint Thérèse—built holiness not through grand miracles but through ordinary daily faithfulness. The saints were not people without storms. They were people who refused to abandon the Rock.

And today, dear couple, you are not merely promising to stay together while life feels easy. You are promising to keep choosing each other when life becomes demanding.

There is an old story about a sculptor working on a massive stone block. A child watching him asked, “How do you know there is an angel inside the stone?” The sculptor replied, “I chip away everything that does not belong.”

Marriage works the same way.

Over the years, God chips away selfishness, pride, impatience, and stubbornness. And slowly, if you allow Him, something holy emerges—not merely two individuals living together, but a covenant reflecting Christ Himself.

But this wisdom is different from worldly wisdom.

The world says: “Protect yourself first.”

Christ says: “Give yourself in love.”

The world says: “Leave when things become difficult.”

Christ says: “Remain faithful.”

The world says: “Follow your feelings.”

The saints say: “Follow truth, and your feelings will learn to follow love.”

Wisdom is not intelligence alone. Wisdom is learning what truly lasts.

There is another story from the life of Saint Francis de Sales. A couple once came to him complaining constantly about one another.

Instead of giving them a lecture, he handed them a glass of water filled to the brim and asked them to carry it through the monastery without spilling it. When they returned, he asked, “Did you notice the people criticizing you as you walked?” They answered, “No, we were too focused on carrying the water carefully.” Francis smiled and said, “That is the secret of marriage. Focus more on protecting love than on counting faults.” That is wisdom.

The Gospel does not say the wise man avoided rain, floods, or winds. The storms struck both houses. But one house stood.

Why?

Because it was built on rock.

Dear friends, the rock beneath Christian marriage is not romance alone. It is Christ. Pray together. Forgive quickly. Speak truth gently. Protect each other’s dignity. Never let pride sleep between you. Hold each other’s hand especially when one of you feels weak.

One day your beauty will age. Your strength will fade. Your achievements will be forgotten by many. But if your marriage is built on Christ, your love will deepen into something far greater than excitement—it will become communion.

And perhaps years from now, when younger couples ask the secret of your marriage, your answer will not be that life was easy, but that God was faithful.

A traveller once visited an old cathedral in Europe that had survived wars, fires, and centuries of storms. Looking at its worn stones, he asked an elderly priest, “How has this building survived so long?”

The priest quietly answered, “Because every generation repaired what the previous generation protected.” That is marriage.

Not perfection.

Not a life without cracks.

But two people who keep rebuilding, repairing, forgiving, protecting, and loving—until together they become a living sanctuary where God Himself dwells.

And that house, built upon the Rock, shall never fall.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Trusting in God, the eternal foundation of every faithful home, let us place before Him our prayers for the Church, for this couple, and for the whole world.

For the Church, that she may continue to guide families with the wisdom of the Gospel and the witness of the saints, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For N. and N., that their marriage may be firmly built upon Christ, strengthened in every storm, and filled with enduring love and fidelity, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all married couples, especially those struggling through difficulties, that God may renew their strength, heal divisions, and deepen their commitment, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For parents, children, and families everywhere, that homes may become places of prayer, forgiveness, wisdom, and peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For our departed loved ones and for all who taught us wisdom by their example of faith and sacrifice, that they may rejoice forever in God's kingdom, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, You are the Rock upon which every lasting love is built. Hear these prayers we offer with confidence and grant them according to Your holy will. 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 strengthening of this marriage 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 in love and called them to become one heart and one life.

In the covenant of marriage You reveal the steadfast love of Christ for His Church, teaching us that what is built upon You can endure every trial and storm.

Through the witness of the saints, You show us that holiness is formed in daily fidelity,

in patience during hardship, in forgiveness after failure, and in love that does not abandon the other.

Today You bless these your servants and strengthen them to build their home upon the Rock who is Christ, so that their family may become a place of faith, hope, and charity for generations to come.

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 wisdom, we dare to say:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters, let us humbly pray to the Lord for these newly married spouses, that He who has brought them together in this sacred covenant may continue to unite them in faithful love.

Holy Father, maker of the whole world, who created man and woman in Your image

and willed that their union be crowned with Your blessing,
look with kindness upon these your servants.

May they build their home upon Christ, the eternal Rock.
Grant them the wisdom to seek one another
in times of joy and sorrow, the humility to forgive,
the courage to persevere through every storm,
and the grace always to protect the unity they celebrate today.

May their words give life, their actions reveal charity,
and their home become a place of prayer, peace, and welcome.
Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may lovingly raise them in faith and wisdom
and hand on to future generations 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 especially this newly married couple,
that their home may remain steadfast in every storm
and become a living witness of reconciliation,
wisdom, and enduring love.
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 becomes strong not in extraordinary moments alone,
but in daily acts of fidelity.
The saints became holy through countless ordinary choices
made with extraordinary love.
Today Christ has nourished us with His own life,
so that this marriage may be rooted not in passing emotion,
but in divine wisdom.
A home built on Christ becomes more than a house—
it becomes a sanctuary where mercy is practiced,
burdens are shared, and God quietly dwells.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of Your heavenly banquet,
we pray, O Lord,
that these your servants, united in Matrimony,
may remain firmly grounded in Christ
and grow in wisdom, patience, and faithful love.
May the grace received in this sacrament
strengthen them throughout every season of life
until they rejoice together in the eternal joy of Your kingdom.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord Jesus,
who built His Church upon the firm foundation of faith,
strengthen your hearts and establish your home in lasting peace.

Amen.

May He grant you the wisdom of the saints,
the patience to endure every trial,
and the joy that comes from faithful love.

Amen.

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

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by building your lives and your
homes upon Christ, the eternal Rock.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

A strong marriage is not built by avoiding storms,
but by choosing every day to stand together
on the Rock who is Christ.

81. The Gift of Children and Spiritual Parenthood

Ps 128; Mt 18:1–5

Theme: “A Home Where Children Are Received as Gifts and Every
Heart Learns Spiritual Parenthood.”

INTRODUCTION

In 1994, during the genocide in Rwanda, a small child wandered alone into a refugee camp. He had lost both parents and had not spoken for days. One evening an elderly woman, who herself had lost her family, quietly sat beside him and placed a piece of bread into his hands. The boy finally spoke one sentence: “Are you my mother now?” That woman later said, “I did not give birth to him, but God gave him to my heart.” Sometimes parenthood begins not in the womb, but in the willingness to make room in one’s life for another soul.

Today, as N. and N. come before the altar of God, the Scriptures speak about children not as possessions, achievements, or burdens, but as blessings entrusted by God. Psalm 128 paints the image of a fruitful home filled with peace and life, while Jesus places a child in the centre and says that greatness begins with humility, tenderness, and the capacity to receive another with love. Christian marriage is not only about building a house together; it is about building a sanctuary where life, faith, hope, and mercy can grow.

Yet all of us know that we do not always love with such openness. Sometimes we become impatient, self-centred, fearful of sacrifice, or unwilling to welcome others into our hearts. Therefore, before we celebrate these sacred mysteries, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord to make us humble enough to receive one another as His gifts.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You welcomed children and revealed in them the beauty of the Kingdom: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You call husbands and wives to become signs of Your tender and faithful love: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You teach us that true greatness is found in humility and self-giving service: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who teaches us to welcome one another with the simplicity of children and the generosity of loving hearts, forgive us our sins, heal what is wounded within us, strengthen us in faithful love, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

O God, who reveal Your Kingdom through humble hearts and bless the family as a dwelling place of love and life, look with kindness upon N. and N., who today pledge themselves to one another in the Sacrament of Marriage.

Teach them to welcome each other daily as Your gift, to cherish the children You may entrust to them, and to become spiritual parents through compassion, faith, and generosity toward all whom they meet.

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

HOMILY

A journalist once asked Mother Teresa, “What is the greatest problem in the world today?” People expected her to speak about poverty, war, or disease. Instead, she answered quietly: “The feeling of being unwanted.”

That is why today’s Gospel is so powerful. Jesus takes a child and places the child in the centre. In the ancient world, children had no status, no power, no importance. Yet Jesus says: *This is where the Kingdom begins.* Not with power. Not with success. But with the ability to receive another person as gift.

Marriage begins beautifully on the wedding day, but its real holiness will be tested in ordinary moments: when one is tired and the other still listens; when forgiveness is chosen instead of pride; when a child cries at 2 a.m.; when sacrifices are made quietly and unnoticed; when two people continue choosing each other even after the excitement fades. Love becomes holy not in grand speeches but in daily self-giving.

Psalm 128 gives us a vision of the blessed home: a table surrounded by life, peace dwelling within the house, joy flowing across generations. But such homes are not built automatically. A house becomes a home when love makes room for others.

There is a story of a father whose daughter had severe disabilities. For years he carried her in his arms to church because she could not walk. Someone once asked him, “Doesn’t this burden exhaust you?” The father answered, “She is not a burden. She is my daughter.”

That is the language of Christian love. Love does not calculate worthiness; it simply gives itself.

Dear N. and N., if God blesses you with children, remember: they are not trophies of success but souls entrusted to your care. Your greatest task will not be to give them wealth, but faith; not merely education, but example; not merely comfort, but courage and compassion.

And even if life unfolds differently than expected, every Christian marriage is called to spiritual parenthood. There are lonely people who need encouragement, wounded people who need mercy, young people who need guidance, elderly people who need companionship. A Christian family should always have a larger table than its own needs.

There is another story told about St. John Bosco. A poor boy once came to him and asked, "Does anybody care if I live or die?" Don Bosco placed his hand on the boy's shoulder and said, "I care. And because I care, God cares." That boy later said that sentence saved his life. Sometimes salvation begins when someone finally feels wanted.

That is what Jesus is teaching in today's Gospel. To welcome another person is to welcome Christ Himself.

So today, N. and N., your marriage is not simply about your happiness. It is about becoming a living sign that no person is unwanted, unloved, or forgotten. Build a home where people encounter tenderness, forgiveness, prayer, and hope. Build a home

where children are received with gratitude, where faith is lived sincerely, and where strangers can discover the warmth of God.

And remember this: at the end of life, God will not ask how successful your home looked from the outside. He will ask a simpler question: "Did people feel loved when they entered your door?"

That is the kind of home that becomes a glimpse of Heaven.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Dear brothers and sisters,
God blesses marriage so that love may flourish, children may be welcomed, and homes may become places of faith and compassion. Trusting in His goodness, let us now place our prayers before Him.

1. For the Church, that she may always welcome the weak, the forgotten, and the young with the tenderness of Christ, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. For N. and N., that their marriage may become a home filled with prayer, joy, generosity, and faithful love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
3. That God may bless this couple with children according to His will, and help them become wise and loving parents and spiritual guides to others, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
4. For children throughout the world, especially those who are abandoned, abused, orphaned, or unloved, that they may find protection and care, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all families experiencing struggles, infertility, grief, or division, that the Lord may strengthen them with hope and healing, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,
You teach us to receive one another as gifts from Your loving hand.
Hear the prayers we offer today
and make our homes reflections of Your Kingdom.
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, family,
and the blessing of life,
may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

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

For in Your wisdom You created man and woman in love
and called them to become one heart and one life.
In Christian marriage You reveal the tenderness of Your covenant
and make the family a school of faith,
compassion, and self-giving love.

You bless husbands and wives
so that their home may become a refuge of peace,
a place where children are welcomed with gratitude,

where the lonely are received with kindness,
and where humble hearts learn the joy of serving one another.

Through Christ, who welcomed the little ones
and revealed that greatness is found in love,
You continue to sanctify human families
and draw them into the life of Your Kingdom.

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

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

With the trust of children loved by God,
and united as one family in Christ,
let us pray in the words our Savior Himself has taught us:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for N. and N.,
who today begin their married life in Christ,
that He may pour out the grace of His blessing upon them.

O God, who in Your loving providence
have called N. and N. into the covenant of Marriage,
pour forth the abundance of Your grace upon them.

Grant that they may remain united in faithful love,
patient in trials, joyful in hope, and steadfast in prayer.
May their home become a place of peace,

where kindness is freely given,
where forgiveness is never withheld,
and where all who enter may encounter the warmth of Christ.

Bless them with children according to Your will,
that they may raise them in wisdom, faith, and compassion,
teaching them to love what is good and holy.

And if at times their path becomes difficult,
give them humble hearts like those praised by Your Son,
that they may always welcome one another with tenderness and
trust.

May they grow old together in gratitude and joy,
surrounded by the love they have shared with others,
until they come at last 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 homes of Your faithful become places where children are
cherished, forgiveness is practiced, and every person is welcomed
with dignity and love.

Who live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who takes away the sins of the world.
In this Eucharist, Christ welcomes us as children of the Father
and nourishes us with the love that builds holy families.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love grows wherever people feel welcomed.
A child flourishes where there is tenderness.
A marriage flourishes where there is forgiveness.
And faith flourishes where Christ remains at the centre.
Today the Lord has nourished us with the Bread of Life
so that our homes may become places
where nobody feels unwanted, forgotten, or unloved.
The simplest acts of patience, listening, sacrifice, and kindness
often become the holiest things we ever do.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of Your Son,
we pray, O Lord,
that N. and N. may be strengthened by this heavenly food
to live their marriage in faithful and generous love.
May their family become a sign of Your presence in the world,
welcoming life with gratitude,
serving others with humility,
and reflecting the tenderness of Christ in all they do.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless this newly married couple
and make their home rich in faith, hope, and love.

Amen.

May He grant them the grace
to welcome one another each day with patience and tenderness.

Amen.

May He bless them with children according to His will
and help them become a source of encouragement and compassion
to many.

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
within your homes,
by the care you give to children and the vulnerable,
and by the welcome you offer to every person you meet.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A Christian home becomes holy
when everyone who enters it
leaves knowing they are loved.”

82. Digital Temptations and Marital Fidelity

Sirach 9:1–9; Mt 5:27–30

Theme: “Guarding the Heart in a Distracted World”

Christian marriage is a covenant that calls husband and wife to protect not only their bodies, but also their eyes, minds, attention, imagination, and hearts. In a digital age filled with hidden temptations and silent distractions, marital fidelity becomes an act of daily discipleship: choosing one another again and again with purity, honesty, and love.

INTRODUCTION

A journalist once interviewed an elderly couple who had been married for sixty-five years. He asked them, “What kept your marriage alive for so long?” The old man quietly removed an old wristwatch from his pocket. The glass was scratched, the strap worn out, and the ticking weak. “This watch stopped many times,” he said, “but I never threw it away. Every time it failed, I repaired it.” Then he looked at his wife and added, “Today people replace what they should repair.”

In a world where even relationships can become disposable, today’s readings invite us to rediscover the sacredness of fidelity — a love that protects, repairs, and perseveres.

Sirach warns us about the subtle ways the heart can wander, while Jesus speaks with radical honesty about purity of heart and integrity of love. The Lord reminds us that infidelity does not begin with betrayal at the altar; it often begins silently in the imagination, in secrecy, in unchecked desires, and in distractions that slowly weaken trust.

As we gather for this wedding celebration, we also recognize our own failures to love faithfully — the moments we allowed distractions, selfishness, hidden temptations, or divided hearts to

distance us from God and from one another. Let us therefore humbly ask the Lord for mercy and healing.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You call husbands and wives to love one another with undivided hearts: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You teach us to guard our eyes, minds, and hearts from all that destroys love: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You renew the weak, restore the broken, and strengthen the faithful in covenant love: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God cleanse our hearts from every hidden sin, heal every wound caused by selfishness and distraction, strengthen us in purity, truth, and fidelity, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

O God, who created man and woman to become one heart and one flesh, grant, we pray, that these your servants may protect with fidelity the covenant they begin today.

In a world filled with distractions and temptations, teach them to keep their eyes fixed on one another and their hearts anchored in your love, so that their marriage may become a sign of trust, purity, perseverance, and 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 young husband once confessed to an elderly monk, “Father, I have never physically betrayed my wife, but my mind is restless. My attention is divided. My phone steals my time. My eyes wander. My heart feels noisy.”

The monk handed him a glass full of water and said, “Carry this across the courtyard without spilling a drop.” The young man returned carefully. The monk asked, “Did you notice the people arguing outside? The musicians playing? The beautiful flowers?” “No,” he answered.

“Why not?”

“Because I was focused on the glass.”

The monk smiled gently: “Where attention goes, the heart follows.”

That is exactly what Jesus speaks about in today’s Gospel. He shocks His listeners with strong words: “If your eye causes you to sin, tear it out.” Jesus is not promoting violence against the body. He is speaking about spiritual urgency. He is telling us that love dies when we stop guarding the heart.

The digital world has changed marriage profoundly. Never before has temptation entered homes so silently and so constantly. A device that connects people can also divide them. A phone can become a doorway to secrecy. A screen can slowly steal emotional intimacy. Sometimes infidelity begins not in a hotel room but in hidden conversations, private fantasies, emotional dependence, or endless scrolling that leaves no time for genuine presence.

A marriage counsellor once described modern relationships with painful accuracy: “Many couples sleep beside each other while

emotionally living on separate planets.” They share a bed but not attention; a house but not presence; schedules but not hearts.

Sirach therefore speaks with timeless wisdom: “Do not give your soul to a woman... Do not sit among married women...” The deeper meaning is this: protect your inner world. Do not play carelessly with emotional and spiritual boundaries. What we repeatedly look at eventually shapes what we desire. What we desire eventually shapes who we become.

But today’s Gospel is not merely a warning — it is a call to freedom. Jesus believes the human heart can be transformed. Fidelity is not simply “avoiding adultery.” Fidelity means choosing one person every day with renewed tenderness. It means saying: “Even when the world offers endless distractions, I will keep returning to you.”

There is a beautiful story about a sailor who spent months at sea. Before every voyage, his wife would place a framed photograph of their wedding day into his suitcase. One sailor mocked him: “After twenty years, why do you still carry that picture?”

The man answered, “Because storms make you forget where home is.” That photograph reminded him who he belonged to.

Marriage needs such reminders. Couples must intentionally return to one another: through prayer, honest conversation, shared meals, forgiveness, affection, and moments without screens. Love survives not because temptation disappears, but because commitment grows deeper than temptation.

And the Church today does not ask this couple merely to avoid sin; she asks them to become witnesses. In a culture where people often

hide behind digital masks, they are called to show transparent love. In a society where many relationships are temporary, they are called to permanence. In a distracted world, they are called to presence.

A nurse in a hospice once spoke about the regrets of dying patients. She said many never regretted not making more money. Many regretted this instead: “I wish I had truly paid attention to the people I loved.” Attention is one of the purest forms of love.

So today, dear couple, guard your marriage not only with promises, but with presence. Protect your eyes. Protect your conversations. Protect your tenderness. Protect your prayer. The strongest marriages are not those without temptation, but those where two people continually choose each other in the presence of God.

And remember this: every notification in life will eventually fall silent. But the voice that truly matters is the one that says, even after many years, “I still choose you.”

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Trusting in God, who calls us to faithful and undivided love, let us present our prayers for this couple and for the whole Church.

1. For the Church:

that she may courageously proclaim the beauty of faithful, pure, and lifelong marriage in a distracted and wounded world, let us pray to the Lord.

2. For this newly married couple:

that they may protect their covenant with honesty, prayer, tenderness, and mutual trust, let us pray to the Lord.

3. For couples struggling with temptation, secrecy, or broken trust:

that God may heal wounded hearts and restore relationships through mercy and truth, let us pray to the Lord.

4. For families and young people:

that they may learn to use technology wisely and never allow screens or distractions to replace genuine human love, let us pray to the Lord.

5. For all gathered here:

that we may keep our hearts focused on what truly matters and grow in fidelity to God and to one another, let us pray to the Lord.

Heavenly Father,
You know the struggles and hopes of every human heart. Hear these prayers and strengthen us in faithful love, 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 fidelity, purity, and steadfast commitment in a distracted 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 you created man and woman in love and called them to become one heart and one flesh. In your wisdom you know the weakness of the human heart, yet you never cease to strengthen those who trust in you.

In this age of noise, distraction, and hidden temptations, you continue to call husbands and wives to the holiness of faithful love. You teach them that true intimacy is built not on passing emotion, but on sacrifice, honesty, purity, and steadfast presence.

Through the covenant of marriage, you make visible your own faithful love for your people, a love that does not abandon, betray, or grow weary, but remains constant through every season of life.

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

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, let us pray for the grace to remain faithful in love, pure in heart, and united as one family before God:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for this bride and groom,
who come today before God's altar,
that he may lovingly pour out his blessing upon them.

O God,
who by your mighty power created all things from nothing
and established the covenant of marriage
as a sign of your faithful love,
look kindly upon these your servants.
Grant that they may remain faithful to one another
in mind, heart, body, and spirit.
Protect them from every temptation that weakens trust
and from every distraction that distances hearts.
Teach them to cherish one another with tenderness,
to speak truth with gentleness,
and to keep alive the joy of their first love.
May they always find time for one another
amid the noise and busyness of life.
May their home be filled with prayer, laughter,
forgiveness, and peace.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may be loving parents
and wise examples of Christian faith and integrity.
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 husbands and wives faithful in love, truthful in speech,
and pure in heart amid the distractions of this world.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who strengthens human love with divine grace and calls
us to fidelity of heart.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love is protected not only by great promises
but by small daily choices.
Every conversation, every act of attention, every moment of honesty
becomes a brick in the home of marriage.
Today Christ has entered this covenant through the Eucharist.
May this couple learn that when love is nourished by God,
fidelity becomes not a burden, but a joy.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of your heavenly banquet, we humbly ask you, Lord, to strengthen this newly married couple with the grace of enduring fidelity. May the Body and Blood of Christ guard their hearts from all that weakens love and help them grow in trust, tenderness, and holiness all the days of their life. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

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

May he protect your hearts from every distraction and temptation, and fill your home with trust, honesty, and peace. **Amen.**

May your marriage become a light to others, revealing the beauty of steadfast and joyful 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 lives of faithful love and undivided hearts.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Where attention goes, the heart follows.
Guard your heart, and you will guard your love.”

83. Unity in Prayer During Crisis

Esther 4:15–17; Mt 18:19–20

Theme: “When Two Kneel Together, God Stands With Them”

Marriage is strongest not when the couple avoids crises, but when they face every storm united in prayer. Esther teaches us that in moments of danger, God’s people survived because they fasted and prayed together. Jesus assures us that when two agree in prayer in His name, He Himself is present among them. Christian marriage therefore becomes a sanctuary where fear is transformed into faith through united prayer.

INTRODUCTION

In 2010, thirty-three miners were trapped deep underground in Chile. For sixty-nine days the world waited anxiously. One miner later said that what kept many of them alive was not food alone, but the moment every evening when they gathered in the darkness, held hands, and prayed together. Underground, without certainty, prayer became oxygen. They discovered that when people pray together, despair loses its authority.

Dear friends, marriage will also have its underground moments: seasons of uncertainty, illness, misunderstanding, financial strain, loneliness, or fear. The readings today remind us that crises do not destroy couples; isolation does. Queen Esther faced disaster not alone but by asking her people to fast and pray with her. Jesus says: “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” The greatest strength of this marriage will not simply be romance, but the ability of this couple to kneel together before God.

Yet there are moments when pride keeps us from praying together, hurt keeps us silent, and fear keeps us distant from God and one another. Therefore, trusting in the mercy of the Lord who unites

hearts and strengthens the weak, let us acknowledge our sins and prepare ourselves to celebrate these sacred mysteries.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You are present wherever hearts unite sincerely in prayer: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You calm the storms that threaten families and relationships: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You teach husbands and wives to carry burdens together in faith and love: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us the moments when we prayed too little,
trusted too little, and loved too little;
heal every wound that divides hearts,
strengthen us in every trial,
and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

O God,
who revealed Your power through the united prayer of Your people
and who dwell among those gathered in Your name,
look with kindness upon these Your servants
joined today in the covenant of Matrimony.

Teach them to seek You together in every joy and crisis,
so that their home may become a place of faith, peace, and
unwavering trust.

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. They were asked, “What kept your marriage together?” The old woman smiled and said, “Every night before sleeping, we prayed together. Some nights we were deeply in love. Some nights we were angry. Some nights we were exhausted. But we never let the sun set without standing beside each other before God.” Then she added quietly, “It is difficult to hate the hand you are holding in prayer.”

That may be one of the deepest truths about Christian marriage.

Today’s readings are not romantic in the usual sense. Esther is standing before a national crisis. Fear surrounds her people. Yet instead of panic, she calls for united prayer and fasting. She understood something essential: when human strength reaches its limit, shared prayer opens the door for divine strength.

Jesus carries the same truth into the Gospel: “If two of you agree on earth about anything for which they are to pray, it shall be granted to them by my heavenly Father.” Notice that Jesus does not say, “If two never disagree.” He says, “If two agree in prayer.” Marriage is not the union of two perfect people. It is the union of two imperfect people who keep returning to God together.

A firefighter once described entering a burning house. Visibility was almost zero because of the smoke. He said the only reason they found the way out was because each firefighter held onto a guide rope attached to the entrance. In marriage, prayer becomes that rope. There will be moments when emotions become smoky and

confusing. There will be days when neither spouse sees clearly. But couples who keep hold of prayer rarely lose their direction entirely.

The world often tells couples: “As long as feelings remain strong, the marriage will survive.” Jesus says something different: “As long as My presence remains at the center, the marriage can survive even weakened feelings, hardships, disappointments, and tears.”

One priest tells the story of visiting a hospital room where a husband sat beside his unconscious wife after a stroke. Machines surrounded her. Doctors had little hope. The priest expected despair. Instead, he saw the husband holding a rosary and whispering prayers beside her bed. He later said, “For forty years we talked to God together every day. I cannot stop now simply because she cannot answer me.” That is covenant love. That is sacred fidelity.

Dear couple, there will come moments when one of you is strong and the other weak. One believes while the other struggles. One sings while the other weeps. In those moments, prayer becomes the bridge carrying the weaker heart.

And notice carefully what Jesus promises: “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” He does not merely listen from afar. He is there. In the kitchen after an argument. In the silence after bad news. In the anxiety over children. In the struggle to forgive. In financial worries. In sleepless nights. Christ does not only visit churches; He dwells inside homes that pray.

A couple celebrating their golden jubilee was once asked the secret of their marriage. The husband answered unexpectedly: “We stopped asking, ‘Who is right?’ and started asking, ‘What will help us

stay united before God?’” That changes everything. Prayer shifts marriage from winning arguments to protecting communion.

And this is important: prayer together is not magic. It will not remove every storm. Esther still had to face danger. Jesus Himself prayed in Gethsemane before the Cross. Prayer does not always change circumstances immediately; often it changes hearts first. It gives courage. It softens pride. It renews hope. It keeps love from becoming merely emotional and roots it in grace.

So today, as you begin this sacrament, remember this simple truth: couples who pray together invite heaven into ordinary life. Your home may not always be perfect, but if Christ remains welcomed there, it will always remain holy.

Let me end with a final story.

During an earthquake in Italy, rescuers found an elderly couple trapped beneath collapsed stones. The wife was frightened and trembling. But witnesses said the husband kept whispering prayers aloud while holding her hand. Hours later, when they were rescued, someone asked the woman how she endured the terror. She answered, “I knew we were not buried alone. God was with us because we prayed together.”

That is the promise of today’s Gospel. Not a life without earthquakes, but a marriage that never faces them alone.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Gathered in the presence of Christ, who promises to remain among those united in prayer, let us confidently present our petitions to the Father.

1. For the Church, that she may continue to strengthen married couples to become homes of prayer, faith, and reconciliation, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. For this newly married couple, that in every crisis and joy they may turn first to God and remain united in love through prayer, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
3. For families burdened by conflict, illness, financial hardship, or loneliness, that the Lord may restore hope and unity within their homes, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
4. For those who feel abandoned, anxious, or discouraged today, that they may discover God's presence through the prayers and support of others, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
5. For our departed loved ones, that they may now rejoice eternally in the presence of God whom they trusted during earthly trials, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of mercy,
You never abandon those who call upon You in faith.
Hear the prayers we place before You today
and keep us united in Your love through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, offered for a couple who desire to build their marriage upon prayer, faith, and trust in God's presence during every storm, may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

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

For in Your wisdom You have called man and woman to walk together in love and to strengthen one another through every trial of life. In moments of fear and uncertainty, You remain close to those who seek You with united hearts. Through the prayers of the faithful Esther, You revealed Your saving power, and through Your Son You promised to remain present wherever believers gather in His name.

Today You bless this couple in the Sacrament of Matrimony, calling them to become a living sign of Christ's faithful love: a home where prayer is stronger than fear, forgiveness stronger than anger, and hope stronger than every crisis.

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 moments of joy and moments of crisis, God remains the loving Father who listens to His children. United as one family in Christ, let us now pray with confidence in the words our Savior gave us.

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for this bride and groom,
who come today to the altar of God,
that through His grace they may faithfully live together
in this holy covenant.

Holy Father, maker of the whole world,
who created man and woman in Your own image
and willed that their union be crowned with Your blessing,
look kindly upon these Your servants.

May Your peace always dwell in their home.
When trials arise,
may they turn toward one another and toward You in prayer.
May they never face suffering alone,
nor allow pride or fear to divide their hearts.

Grant that they may be signs of Christ's tenderness in the world,
patient in hardship, faithful in love,
quick to forgive, and steadfast in hope.
May their home become a refuge of compassion,
where the lonely are welcomed and the sorrowful comforted.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may lovingly raise them in faith, wisdom, and holiness.

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

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, who said to Your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with Your will.
Strengthen especially all married couples in times of trial,
that united in prayer they may overcome division and fear through
Your abiding presence. Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

This is Jesus Christ,
the Lord who remains present among those who gather in His name,
strengthening weary hearts and nourishing faithful love.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Marriage is not sustained by love alone,
but by grace continually received.
Today Christ has entered this union sacramentally,
not as a distant guest but as a permanent companion.
In every future joy, every disappointment, every reconciliation,
and every silent tear, His presence will remain.
Couples who pray together slowly learn that even in weakness,
God never abandons them.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of Your Son,
we pray, O Lord,
that this newly married couple
may always draw strength from Your presence.
When burdens grow heavy,
keep them united in prayer and steadfast in love.
May this Eucharist deepen their faith, strengthen their covenant,
and make their home a living witness to Your peace.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord Jesus,
who promised to remain among those gathered in His name,
fill your hearts and your home with His abiding presence. **Amen.**
May He strengthen you in every crisis,
deepen your unity through prayer,
and preserve you in faithful love all the days of your life. **Amen.**
May almighty God bless all of you gathered here,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by building homes where prayer is
stronger than fear and love stronger than every trial.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A marriage that kneels together before God
will always find the strength to stand together before the world.”

84. The Strength of Gentle Words

Pro 15:1; Lk 6:45

Theme: “Love Speaks Life: The Strength of Gentle Words in
Marriage”

INTRODUCTION

A man once visited an old carpenter who had been married for more than sixty years. Someone asked him, “What is the secret of such a long marriage?” The old man smiled and pointed to a tiny crack in an old ceramic cup on the table. “One day,” he said, “my wife dropped this cup and feared I would be angry. But instead of saying, ‘Look what you’ve done,’ I said, ‘Thank God it was only a cup and not you.’ That moment taught us something: homes are not destroyed first by great tragedies, but by small harsh words repeated over time.”

The Book of Proverbs tells us today: “*A gentle answer turns away wrath.*” Jesus adds in the Gospel: “*From the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks.*” Marriage is built not only in grand promises but in daily conversations — in the tone used after a tiring day, in words spoken during misunderstandings, in how spouses speak when nobody else is listening. Gentle words are not weak words; they are strong enough to heal wounds, calm storms, and protect love.

Yet all of us know moments when our words have injured instead of healed, discouraged instead of strengthened. Therefore, as we begin these sacred mysteries, let us ask the Lord to cleanse our hearts, so that our lips may speak with kindness, patience, and love.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You speak words that heal the broken-hearted:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You teach us that gentle words bring peace and life:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, You call husbands and wives to speak from hearts filled with love: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God soften every hardness within us,
heal the wounds caused by careless words,
teach us to speak with gentleness and truth,
forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God,
who reveal the beauty of love
through words that console, encourage, and give peace,
grant that these your servants,
joined today in the covenant of Marriage,
may build their home upon patience, tenderness, and truth,
so that their speech may always strengthen one another in 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 teacher once asked her students to squeeze all the toothpaste out of a tube onto a plate. They laughed and did it easily. Then she said, "Now put it back into the tube." Suddenly the room became silent. One child finally whispered, "That's impossible." The teacher replied, "So are words once they leave your mouth."

Dear friends, that is why today's readings are so powerful for a marriage. Proverbs says, "*A gentle answer turns away wrath.*" Jesus says, "*From the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks.*" In other words, the words spoken inside a marriage reveal the condition of the heart behind them.

Many couples imagine marriage will be tested mainly by finances, illness, or responsibilities. But often marriage survives those things. What quietly weakens love are repeated sharp words, sarcastic comments, cold silences, humiliations spoken in anger, or sentences that linger in the memory for years.

There is an old Jewish story about a rabbi who told a man guilty of gossip to cut open a pillow in the middle of the town square and let the feathers scatter in the wind. The man did it easily. Then the rabbi said, "Now gather every feather." The man protested, "That cannot be done!" The rabbi answered, "Neither can words be taken back once released."

That is why gentle speech is not softness; it is spiritual maturity. Anybody can shout. Anybody can wound. But it takes strength to remain kind when disappointed, calm when angry, patient when tired.

One elderly woman celebrating fifty years of marriage was once asked, “Did you ever consider divorce?” She smiled and answered, “Divorce? Never. Murder? A few times.” Everyone laughed. Then she added something profound: “We survived because we learned to speak to each other as companions, not enemies.”

That may be one of the greatest lessons for marriage. The person beside you is not your opponent. In every disagreement, the real enemy is not each other — it is pride, impatience, ego, and careless speech.

Jesus says today that words come from the abundance of the heart. If bitterness fills the heart, bitterness will reach the lips. But if prayer fills the heart, then even correction will sound loving. If gratitude fills the heart, encouragement will become natural.

A husband once admitted that after every argument he would leave the house and drive away in anger. One night his grandfather told him, “Before you speak loudly to your wife, remember this: she is carrying your heart in her hands, and you are carrying hers.” That changed him forever.

Dear couple, your marriage will not become holy merely because you live under the same roof. It will become holy when your words become blessings for each other. Say “thank you” often. Say “forgive me” quickly. Say “I am proud of you” sincerely. Say “let us pray” especially during difficult times.

Children who grow up hearing gentle words learn security. Guests entering your home will feel peace. Even in old age, your voices can still become a refuge for one another.

And remember this: on the day of your wedding, you are giving each other not only rings, but also your daily voice — the tone with which you will speak for the rest of your lives.

There is a touching story of a husband caring for his wife who had lost her memory through illness. Someone asked him, “Why do you still speak so tenderly to her? She no longer remembers who you are.” He replied, “But I remember who she is.”

That is love. Love continues speaking gently even when life becomes difficult. Love chooses words that protect dignity. Love speaks life.

And perhaps years from now, when wrinkles replace youthful beauty and silence fills the house after children have grown, what will remain strongest in this marriage will not be wealth or achievements, but the memory of how you spoke to one another — whether your words became wounds or whether they became a sanctuary.

May your home become a place where heaven can be heard in the sound of gentle voices.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Trusting in the God whose word brings healing and peace, let us now offer our prayers for the Church, the world, and this newly married couple.

1. For the Church, that her words may always proclaim mercy, truth, and hope to a wounded world, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For all married couples, that they may speak to one another with patience, encouragement, and tenderness, especially during times of conflict, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For families wounded by harsh words, silence, or division, that the Lord may restore healing and reconciliation, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For N. and N., united today in Holy Matrimony, that their home may always echo with kindness, forgiveness, prayer, and joyful love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all gathered here, that our speech may reflect hearts transformed by Christ, and that we may become instruments of peace wherever we go, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, You speak words of eternal life to Your people. Hear the prayers we place before You today, and teach us to love with words that heal and give peace. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters,
that this sacrifice, offered with grateful hearts
and with prayers for this newly married couple,
whose love is called to be strengthened
through words of kindness and fidelity,
may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

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

For in Your wisdom
You created man and woman in love
and called them to become one heart and one life.
In the covenant of Marriage
You teach us that love is strengthened not only by promises,
but by daily acts of patience, forgiveness, and gentle speech.

Through Your Son,
You revealed that words flowing from a faithful heart
can heal wounds, calm anger, and restore peace.
And today You bless N. and N.,
that their home may become a dwelling of kindness,
where truth is spoken with love
and every conversation reflects the tenderness of Christ.

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 calls us to speak to one another
as His beloved children:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for this bride and groom,
who come today before God's altar,
that He may graciously bless them
and make their marriage a sign of His 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 Your grace upon N. and N.,
who today enter the covenant of Marriage.

Grant that their hearts may remain gentle toward one another,
their words truthful and patient,
their home peaceful and welcoming,
and their love steadfast in times of joy and trial.

Teach them to forgive quickly, to encourage generously,
and to speak always in ways that bring healing and hope.

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

As they journey together through the years,
may they grow old in mutual respect and tenderness,
and after a life rich in love and fidelity,
may they come with all the saints
to the eternal wedding feast of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to Your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of Your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with Your
will.
May the peace You give also guide the words spoken within every
family, so that homes may become places of reconciliation,
tenderness, and lasting love.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who teaches us to love with truthful and gentle hearts.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love is often remembered not by grand occasions,
but by ordinary words spoken every day.
A gentle "How are you?", a patient silence, a sincere apology,
a whispered prayer before sleep —
these become the bricks from which a holy marriage is built.
May Christ, whom we have received today,
remain in this couple's hearts and upon their lips,
so that their home may always speak the language of heaven.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at this heavenly table,
we pray, O Lord,
that You may deepen the love of this newly married couple,
so that nourished by the Body of Christ,
they may speak words that strengthen one another,
bear one another's burdens with patience,
and become witnesses of peace within the world.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May He fill your hearts with patience and your home with peace.
May He teach you to speak words that heal, encourage, and
strengthen one another.
May He bless your family with enduring love and joyful faith.
And may almighty God bless all of you,
the Father, ✠ and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go forth in peace, glorifying the Lord by the kindness of your words
and the love of your lives.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A successful marriage is not built only by saying ‘I love you,’
but by speaking every day in a way that makes the other person feel
loved.”

85. Learning to Carry One Another's Burdens

Gal 6:2; Mt 11:28–30

Theme: “Love Carries: Marriage as the Sacred Sharing of Burdens”

INTRODUCTION

In 1987, rescuers in Texas found an eight-year-old boy carrying his little brother through the ruins after a devastating collapse. One rescuer looked at the exhausted child and said, “Son, put him down. He must be heavy.” The boy answered with words that stunned everyone present: **“He’s not heavy. He’s my brother.”**

Love changes the meaning of weight. What crushes one person becomes bearable when carried together. The deepest relationships are not built on how much joy two people can create when life is easy, but on how faithfully they carry each other when life becomes difficult.

Today, dear friends, we gather because marriage is not merely a romance of beautiful days; it is a covenant that says: *“Your pain will never again belong to you alone.”* Saint Paul tells us, “Carry one another's burdens,” while Jesus invites the weary to come to Him and find rest. Christian marriage becomes holy when two people learn to carry together what neither could carry alone.

Yet we also know that sometimes we have added weight instead of lifting burdens — through impatience, pride, harsh words, selfishness, or silence. Therefore, before we celebrate this sacred covenant, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord for mercy and strength.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You carry the burdens of the weary and give rest to troubled hearts: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You teach us to love not only in moments of joy but also in sacrifice and endurance: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You unite husband and wife so they may strengthen one another through every season of life: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May Almighty God,
who sent His Son to carry the weight of our sins
and to lighten every burdened heart,
forgive us for the times we have failed to love generously,
strengthen us in compassion and fidelity,
and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God,
who teach us through Your Son
that love becomes holy when it bears the burdens of another,
look with kindness upon Your servants gathered here today.
Strengthen N. and N. in patience, tenderness, and faithful sacrifice,
that their marriage may become a place of rest, healing,
and hope for one another and for all they meet.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son,
who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A man once visited an elderly priest and complained bitterly about his marriage.

“Father,” he said, “marriage has become too heavy for me.”

The old priest quietly asked him, “When your wife became sick last year, who stayed beside her every night?”

“I did,” the man replied.

“And when you lost your job, who encouraged you not to give up?”

“My wife did.”

The priest smiled gently and said,

“Then the problem is not that the marriage became heavy. The problem is that you forgot love was designed to carry weight.”

That is the heart of today’s Gospel.

Jesus says:

“Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest.”

Notice something remarkable: Jesus never says life will have no burdens. Instead, He promises we will never carry them alone.

And Saint Paul takes that teaching even further:

“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

Dear N. and N., today you are not simply promising to share a house, a surname, or a future. You are promising something much deeper:

“I will help carry your fears. I will help carry your wounds. I will help

carry your disappointments. And when your strength fails, I will lend you mine.”

That is Christian marriage.

The world often defines love by feelings. But feelings change like weather. The Gospel defines love differently: love is the decision to remain, to carry, to stay faithful even when life becomes heavy.

There is an old story of a husband whose wife developed memory loss late in life. Every morning he would visit her at the care home and feed her breakfast. One nurse asked him, “Does your wife still recognize you?”

He quietly answered, “No. She no longer knows who I am.”

The nurse asked, “Then why do you still come every single day?”

The old man smiled and replied,
“Because I still know who she is.”

That is covenant love.

That is burden-bearing love.

That is the kind of love Jesus Himself has for us.

Marriage becomes most beautiful not during candlelight dinners or perfect vacations, but in hospital rooms, financial struggles, sleepless nights with children, moments of misunderstanding, and seasons when one partner becomes weak and the other chooses not to walk away.

One day, dear couple, one of you may carry the other through illness. One may carry the other through grief. One may carry the other through failure or fear. And there will be days when both of you

feel too tired to carry anything at all. On those days, remember this Gospel: Christ Himself will carry both of you.

A mountain guide once said that climbers survive dangerous peaks not because they are individually strong, but because they remain tied together by a rope. If one slips, the other holds firm. The rope saves them.

Today, your rope is not merely emotion. It is Christ.

And this is why marriage is sacred: because it becomes a living image of Jesus Himself — the One who carried the cross for love.

At the end of life, people rarely say, “I wish I had earned more.” Most say, “I wish I had loved better.”

Dear N. and N., years from now, wrinkles may replace youth, strength may fade, and life may test you in ways you cannot yet imagine. But if you continue carrying one another with tenderness, patience, forgiveness, and faith, your marriage will preach a sermon more powerful than words.

And perhaps one day, when people look at your lives together, they will say:

“They made each other’s burdens lighter.”

And in heaven, Christ Himself will say:

“What you carried for one another in love, you carried for Me.”

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Gathered in faith before God, who lightens every burden and strengthens all who love faithfully, let us bring before Him our prayers for this couple and for the needs of the world.

1. For the Church, that she may continue to be a refuge for the weary, a comfort for families in difficulty, and a witness to Christ's compassionate love, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For N. and N., that their marriage may be marked by patience in trials, tenderness in weakness, and unwavering fidelity in every season of life, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples who are struggling under burdens of illness, financial hardship, loneliness, or misunderstanding, that Christ may renew their strength and restore their hope, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

4. For parents, caregivers, and all who quietly carry the burdens of others each day, that God may sustain them with courage and peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For our departed loved ones, especially those who taught us sacrificial love by their example, that they may find eternal rest in God's kingdom, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,

You sent Your Son to carry our burdens and give rest to weary hearts. Hear the prayers we place before You today, and strengthen us always in faithful love. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, offered in gratitude for the love that unites N. and N. and for the grace that helps us carry one another's burdens, 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 the joys and burdens of life, so that no heart would carry its struggles alone.

In the covenant of marriage

You reveal the faithful love of Christ,

who bears the weight of our sins, comforts the weary, and strengthens the weak with mercy and tenderness.

Today You bless N. and N.,

calling them to become for one another

a sign of hope, patience, and enduring love.

Through their fidelity and sacrifice,

may their home become a place of peace,

where burdens are shared, wounds are healed,

and Your presence is made visible.

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 never abandons His children
and who teaches us to carry one another in love.

NUPTIAL BLESSING OVER THE COUPLE

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for N. and N.,
who come today to begin their married life at the altar of God,
that He may bless them with unity of heart and steadfast love.

Holy Father, creator of all goodness,
You made man and woman to walk together in faithful love.
Pour out the grace of Your Holy Spirit upon N. and N.,
that they may support one another in times of joy and sorrow,
carry each other's burdens with patience,
and never cease to encourage one another in hope.

Grant that their home may be filled with kindness,
gentle words, forgiveness, and peace.
When life becomes difficult, give them strength to remain faithful;
when they grow weary, renew them with the comfort of Christ.
Bless them also with the gift of children,
that they may lovingly welcome new life
and raise their family in faith, wisdom, and compassion.

May their marriage reveal to the world
the enduring love of Christ for His people,
and after a long and blessed life together,
bring them to the joy of Your heavenly kingdom.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR PEACE

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

Teach us also to lighten one another's burdens
with compassion and patience,
so that our homes and families
may become places of healing and rest.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who carries the burdens of the world
and gives rest to weary hearts.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love is proven not by how loudly it speaks in beautiful moments,
but by how faithfully it remains in difficult ones.
Today Christ has nourished us with His own life —
the One who carried the cross for love. May N. and N.
learn from Him that every burden shared in love becomes lighter,
every wound touched by compassion begins to heal,
and every sacrifice offered faithfully becomes holy.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at this sacred table, we ask You, Lord, to strengthen N. and N. with the grace of this sacrament, that they may continue to support one another with faithful and generous love. May Christ, who refreshes the weary and strengthens the burdened, remain always at the centre of their marriage and home. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord Jesus Christ, who carried the cross out of love for the world, strengthen your hearts to carry one another with patience and tenderness. **Amen.**

May He bless your home with peace, your marriage with fidelity, and your family with 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 carrying one another's burdens in love.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

A strong marriage is not one where two people never struggle; it is one where neither person is forced to struggle alone.

86. Marriage and the Beatitudes

Rom 12:9–21; Mt 5:1–12

Theme: “Blessed Are the Merciful: Building a Marriage on the Beatitudes”

INTRODUCTION

In 1938, in a tiny village in Italy, a poor young couple began married life with almost nothing. Their house had cracked walls, a leaking roof, and only one loaf of bread left for supper. That evening, a beggar knocked at their door asking for food. The husband became angry: “We barely have enough for ourselves.” But his wife quietly cut the loaf in half and handed part of it to the stranger. Years later, their children would say, “That night taught us what marriage truly means — not possessing love, but becoming love.” Poverty did not destroy that marriage; selfishness could have. Mercy saved it.

Today's readings reveal that Christian marriage is not built merely on romance, convenience, or compatibility. Saint Paul urges: “Let love be genuine... bless those who persecute you... overcome evil with good.” And Jesus proclaims the Beatitudes — a vision of love that is humble, merciful, patient, pure, forgiving, and faithful even through suffering. The Beatitudes are not decorations for holy pictures; they are the architecture of a holy marriage.

Yet every couple knows how difficult this path can be. Pride wounds relationships, impatience hardens hearts, anger creates distance, and selfishness steals joy. Therefore, before we celebrate this sacred covenant, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord to make our hearts poor in spirit, merciful in love, and rich in grace.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You bless the poor in spirit and teach us humility in love:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You bless the merciful and call us to forgive one

another from the heart: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You bless the peacemakers and unite hearts in enduring

fidelity: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,
heal every wound caused by pride, selfishness, and impatience,
strengthen us to live the Beatitudes in our homes,
and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who revealed in the Beatitudes
the beauty of a heart transformed by love,
grant that these your servants,
joined today in the covenant of Marriage,
may learn to be merciful in trials, gentle in speech, pure in fidelity,
and steadfast in bringing peace to one another.

May their home become a living witness
that true blessedness is found not in receiving love alone
but in giving it generously.

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

HOMILY

A woman once visited an elderly couple celebrating seventy years of marriage. She asked them, “What is the secret of your long and happy marriage?”

The old husband smiled and pointed to an old wooden drawer in the kitchen. Inside were dozens of tiny scraps of paper. On each paper was written a hurt, an argument, or a disappointment from their married life. The visitor was shocked. “You kept record of all your fights?”

The wife gently replied, “No. Every time we hurt each other, we wrote it down and placed it there. At the end of every year, we burned the papers together.”

Then she added quietly: “A happy marriage is made not by never hurting each other, but by refusing to keep ashes.”

That is exactly what Jesus is teaching in the Beatitudes.

The world says: “Blessed are the powerful, the admired, the successful.”

Jesus says: “Blessed are the meek... the merciful... the peacemakers.”

The world says marriage survives through strength.

Jesus says marriage survives through mercy.

Saint Paul in today’s reading gives one of the most practical descriptions of married love ever written:

“Let love be genuine.”

“Outdo one another in showing honour.”

“Bless those who persecute you.”

“Do not repay evil for evil.”

That last line may be one of the hardest commandments in marriage.

Because sometimes the greatest wounds do not come from strangers but from the person closest to us. A careless word. Forgotten affection. Silence after an argument. Coldness during suffering.

A young husband once complained to a monk, “Father, my wife has changed.”

The monk asked, “Do you still speak kindly to her?”

“Not as much.”

“Do you still listen carefully to her?”

“Not really.”

“Do you still admire her?”

The husband lowered his head.

The monk smiled gently and said, “Then perhaps it is not your wife who changed. Perhaps it is your love that stopped seeing.”

The Beatitudes teach couples how to keep seeing each other with grace.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit.”

Marriage requires humility — the courage to say, “I was wrong.”

“Blessed are those who mourn.”

Every marriage will carry sorrow: disappointments, sickness, failures, losses. But tears shared together become sacred.

“Blessed are the merciful.”

Mercy is the daily oxygen of marriage. Without forgiveness, love suffocates.

“Blessed are the peacemakers.”

Not peacekeepers who avoid conflict, but peacemakers who heal conflict with truth and tenderness.

There is an old story of a cathedral in Europe destroyed during war. After the bombing, only one statue of Jesus remained standing. But both hands of the statue had been blown away. Later, the parish rebuilt the church and placed beneath the damaged statue these words:

“Christ has no hands now but ours.”

That is Christian marriage.

Through your hands, Christ comforts.

Through your words, Christ encourages.

Through your forgiveness, Christ heals.

Through your fidelity, Christ remains faithful in the world.

Dear couple, today you are not simply promising to stay together. You are promising to help each other become saints.

And sainthood in marriage is rarely dramatic. It is hidden in ordinary moments:

making coffee when tired,

listening when exhausted,

remaining faithful when tempted,

choosing kindness during anger,

holding hands beside a hospital bed,
praying together when answers do not come.

That is Beatitude love.

A nurse once cared for an old man whose wife no longer recognized him because of Alzheimer's disease. Every morning he visited her, fed her breakfast, combed her hair, and spoke to her tenderly.

Someone finally asked him, "Why do you still come every day when she does not even know who you are?"

The old man smiled through tears and answered:

"She may not know me anymore — but I still know who she is."

That is the love Christ speaks about today.

A love that does not disappear when feelings fade.

A love that remains merciful, faithful, and gentle.

A love that carries the Beatitudes into ordinary life.

And that kind of love — Jesus says — is truly blessed.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Gathered in joy before the Lord who blesses the merciful and the peacemakers, let us present our prayers for this couple and for the needs of the whole world.

1. For the Church, that she may continue to witness to the Beatitudes through compassion, humility, and peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For this newly married couple, that their home may be filled with mercy, patience, forgiveness, and enduring fidelity, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples who struggle with conflict, disappointment, or loneliness, that Christ may restore tenderness and hope within their hearts, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For families burdened by poverty, sickness, grief, or division, that they may discover strength in the love of Christ and the support of others, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all gathered here, that we may become peacemakers in our homes and communities and overcome evil with good, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,

You revealed true blessedness through Your Son.

Hear the prayers we bring before You today,

and help us live the Beatitudes

through lives of mercy, humility, and faithful 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 faithful and merciful 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 the Beatitudes of Your Son
You revealed the path to lasting joy:
a life shaped by mercy, humility, purity of heart, and peace.
And in the covenant of Christian Marriage
You call husband and wife
to reflect that blessed love in the world.

Through mutual forgiveness they reveal Your compassion;
through fidelity they proclaim Your faithfulness;
through patience in suffering they share in the Cross of Christ;
and through their generosity of heart
they become signs of Your Kingdom among us.

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 Savior's command
and formed by divine teaching,
let us pray to the Father
that our homes may become places of mercy,
reconciliation, and peace.

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for this bride and groom,
who come today to begin their married life at God's altar,
that He may bless them with unity of heart and lasting peace.

O God,
who in Your loving plan
created man and woman to walk together in faithful love,
pour out the grace of Your blessing upon these newlyweds.

Grant that they may be poor in spirit before one another,
gentle in moments of conflict,
merciful in times of weakness,
and steadfast as peacemakers within their home.

May they never allow pride to divide them
or anger to harden their hearts,
but help them to forgive quickly,
love generously,
and carry one another's burdens with joy.

Bless them with children,
and help them to become wise and loving parents
who will guide their family in faith, hope, and charity.

May their home be a refuge for the weary,
a place of prayer in suffering,
and a witness to the blessedness
that comes from living Your Gospel.
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 to become peacemakers within our homes,
so that forgiveness may overcome resentment
and mercy may triumph over every wound.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
who blesses the merciful, the pure of heart, and the peacemakers.
Happy are those who learn to overcome evil with good.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

The Beatitudes are no longer merely words spoken from a mountain;
they are now a path placed before this couple.
In every act of forgiveness, every quiet sacrifice,
every shared sorrow, and every faithful embrace,
Christ will continue to dwell within their marriage.
True blessedness is not found in a perfect life,
but in a love that continues to choose mercy every day.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at this heavenly table, we pray, O Lord,
that these sacred mysteries
may strengthen this newly married couple
to live the Beatitudes with faithful hearts: to be merciful in weakness,
peaceful in conflict, patient in suffering, and steadfast in love.
May their union become a living sign
of Christ's enduring presence in the world.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May He make your home rich in mercy,
your words gentle in times of trial,
and your hearts steadfast in fidelity.

May He teach you to forgive quickly,
to comfort one another tenderly,
and to walk together as peacemakers in the world.

May Almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son ✠, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by living the Beatitudes
in your marriage and overcoming evil with good.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A blessed marriage is not one without wounds,
but one where mercy is greater than every wound.”

87. Peace in the Home Begins with the Heart

Is 32:17–18; Jn 14:27

Theme: “Peace in the Home Begins with the Heart.”

True peace in marriage is not merely the absence of conflict but the presence of Christ reigning within two hearts. When hearts are surrendered to God, homes become places of safety, healing, gentleness, and rest.

INTRODUCTION

A journalist once asked an elderly woman who had been married for over sixty years, “What is the secret of a peaceful marriage?” She smiled and answered, “Twice a day I prayed one dangerous prayer: ‘Lord, fix my heart before You fix my spouse.’” The reporter laughed at first, but she continued: “The greatest wars in a home are rarely caused by money or schedules. They begin when pride occupies the heart.” Peace in a family is never built first in the living room, but in the hidden room of the soul.

Today’s readings speak exactly about that mystery. Isaiah promises that “the work of justice will be peace,” while Jesus tells His disciples, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.” Christ does not offer a fragile peace based on perfect circumstances. He offers a peace that survives misunderstandings, tears, disappointments, and even suffering, because it is rooted in Him.

As this couple comes before the altar today, they do not claim to be perfect people. They come as two human hearts asking Christ to dwell within them. And because every home can only be as peaceful as the hearts living inside it, let us first ask the Lord to heal whatever within us disturbs His peace. And so, with humble hearts, let us begin our celebration by acknowledging our sins.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You are the Prince of Peace, yet we often allow anger, pride, and impatience to wound those we love. **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You teach us to forgive as we ourselves have been forgiven, yet we cling to resentment and harsh words.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, You desire to make our homes places of mercy and rest, yet we fail to welcome Your peace into our hearts.

Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,
heal the unrest within our hearts, forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

Heavenly Father,

You sent Your Son into the world as the Prince of Peace and the source of every lasting home.

Look with love upon this bride and groom, who today entrust their lives to one another before Your altar.

Grant that their hearts may remain rooted in patience, mercy, forgiveness, and steadfast love, so that their home may become a refuge of peace for one another and for all who enter it.

Teach them to seek You in moments of joy and in times of trial, and let the peace of Christ guard their hearts all the days of their lives.

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

Amen.

HOMILY

A fire once broke out in a small apartment building late at night. Panic spread everywhere. People screamed from windows. Smoke filled the hallways. Firefighters rushed in and carried out an elderly man who had lost almost everything he owned. Someone asked him afterward, "What were you thinking while the fire was happening?" The old man answered quietly, "I only prayed that my wife would make it out safely. Because if she was beside me, we could rebuild everything else."

That is peace.
Not the absence of flames.
Not the absence of problems.
But the presence of love stronger than fear.

Jesus says today, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you." Notice carefully: Jesus does not say, "I give you an easy life." He says, "I give you My peace." There is a difference. The world gives peace only when conditions are favourable. Christ gives peace even in storms.

And every married couple eventually faces storms.

There will be days when exhaustion speaks louder than tenderness. There will be misunderstandings, financial burdens, fears about children, worries about health, moments of disappointment, and seasons when romance feels distant. Marriage is not the joining of two perfect people. It is the daily decision of two imperfect hearts to keep choosing love.

Isaiah says, "The work of justice will be peace." In marriage, peace is work. Peace is built every time one spouse chooses listening instead of winning. Peace is built every time forgiveness is offered before resentment grows roots. Peace is built every time pride kneels down and says, "I'm sorry."

A married man once admitted after forty years of marriage, "The two most important sentences in our home were not 'I love you,' but 'Forgive me,' and 'Thank you.'" Those simple words saved their marriage many times.

Because peace is not created by grand gestures alone. It is protected in ordinary moments.

A little girl once drew a picture of her family at school. The teacher noticed that everyone in the drawing was smiling except the father. "Why is your dad not smiling?" the teacher asked. The girl answered, "Because Daddy works hard so everybody else can smile." That child had already discovered something sacred: love sacrifices itself so others may have peace.

Dear bride and groom, today you are not simply promising romance. You are promising refuge. Your marriage must become the place where each of you can return wounded by life and still be received with tenderness.

The world outside can be cruel enough. Your home must not become another battlefield.

And peace begins in the heart.

If bitterness lives in the heart, bitterness eventually enters the conversation. If pride rules the heart, pride eventually wounds the marriage. But if Christ rules the heart, then even difficult conversations can become holy moments of healing.

A priest once visited a couple married for fifty years and asked them, “In all those years, did you ever consider divorce?” The husband answered, “Divorce? Never. Murder, perhaps. But never divorce.” Everyone laughed, but then the wife added softly, “We stayed because every time one of us became weak, the other remembered the promise.”

That is covenant love.

Not walking away when love becomes difficult, but allowing God to deepen love through difficulty.

And that is why today matters so much. This is not merely a social event. This is a sacred beginning. Christ Himself is entering this union. He will stand in your laughter. He will stand in your tears. He will stand beside your table in ordinary dinners and beside your bed in sleepless nights.

But you must keep inviting Him in.

Pray together. Forgive quickly. Speak gently. Never weaponize silence. Never let anger sleep comfortably in your home. And never become too proud to hold hands after an argument.

Because the peace of a home is not measured by how loudly people laugh during celebrations, but by how deeply they remain faithful during suffering.

Let me end with this.

After a devastating earthquake, rescuers found an elderly couple sitting quietly beside the ruins of their house. Everything was destroyed. A reporter asked the wife, “How can you both remain so calm?” She held her husband’s hand and answered, “Our home collapsed, but our foundation did not.”

That is the kind of marriage Christ desires for you.

A home where walls may someday crack, bodies may weaken, circumstances may change—but the foundation remains unshaken because Christ Himself lives within your hearts.

And where Christ lives, peace survives.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Brothers and sisters, trusting in Christ who alone can bring lasting peace to every human heart and home, let us offer our prayers to the Father.

For the Church throughout the world, that she may continue to proclaim Christ as the true source of peace and reconciliation, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For this bride and groom, that their home may always be filled with patience, forgiveness, tenderness, and prayer, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For married couples experiencing trials, misunderstandings, or loneliness, that God may heal wounded hearts and restore peace within their families, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For families broken by conflict, division, or resentment, that the Holy Spirit may soften hearts and lead them toward reconciliation, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all gathered here today, that we may become instruments of Christ's peace in our homes, workplaces, and relationships, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of mercy and peace, hear the prayers we place before You today, and make our hearts worthy dwelling places for Your Son, who lives and reigns forever and ever.

Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, offered for a home founded upon the peace of 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 in love, that they might no longer live for themselves alone, but become for one another companions, comfort, and strength.

In Christ Your Son, You revealed that true peace is born not from power or success, but from hearts surrendered to mercy, patience, and faithful love.

Today You bless this bride and groom, calling them to build a home where forgiveness is stronger than anger, where tenderness overcomes fear, and where Your presence becomes the lasting foundation of their life together.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, and with all the saints, we sing the hymn of Your glory, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, let us pray with confidence to the Father who desires every home to become a dwelling place of His peace.

NUPTIAL BLESSING

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

Holy Father, creator of all things and source of every blessing, look with favour upon these newly married spouses. Pour into their hearts the peace of Christ, that their love may remain steadfast in times of joy and in moments of trial.

Grant that they may speak to one another with gentleness,
serve one another with humility,
and forgive one another without delay.
May their home become a place of welcome, healing, and prayer,
where faith is cherished and love renewed each day.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may raise them in wisdom, compassion,
and reverence for Your holy name.
Give them strength in difficulty, comfort in sorrow,
gratitude in prosperity,
and fidelity throughout all the years of their life together.

And after a long and blessed life,
may they come with all whom they love
into the eternal home 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 begins in our hearts
also dwell within our homes and relationships,
making us instruments of reconciliation and mercy.
Who live and reign forever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

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

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Peace does not enter a home through locked doors or perfect plans.
It enters quietly whenever Christ is welcomed into human hearts.
Today this couple has received not only one another,
but Christ Himself.
May the One whom they received at this altar
remain the unseen guest at every meal,
the silent strength in every trial,
and the enduring peace within their home.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at Your table, O Lord,
we ask that this holy sacrament
may strengthen the love of this bride and groom
and deepen the peace that comes from You alone.
May their marriage bear witness to patient love,
faithful forgiveness, and joyful hope,
so that all who enter their home
may encounter the presence of Christ.
Who lives and reigns forever and ever.
Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless your hearts with His peace and keep your love steadfast through every season of life.

Amen.

May He make your home a refuge of mercy, patience, joy, and faithful love.

Amen.

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 building homes where Christ's peace may dwell.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Marriage finds peace not when two people stop disagreeing, but when two hearts keep allowing Christ to reign within them.”

88. Love that Reflects the Trinity

2 Cor 13:11–13; Jn 17:20–23

Theme: “A Love That Makes Many One: Marriage as a Reflection of the Trinity.”

INTRODUCTION

A small boy once asked his grandmother, “If God is only one, why do we speak of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?” The grandmother smiled, took three candles, lit them from one flame, and said, “Look carefully. Three flames... but one light. Love is like that. Real love is never lonely. It always reaches out, gives itself away, and becomes communion.” The child never forgot it. Neither should we.

Today, as N. and N. stand before this altar, we celebrate more than a human promise. Their marriage is meant to mirror the very life of God Himself. In the Holy Trinity, the Father loves the Son, the Son receives and returns that love, and the Holy Spirit is the living bond of that communion. Christian marriage becomes holy when husband and wife learn not merely to live beside one another, but to become a communion of self-giving love that radiates unity to the world.

Yet we also know that selfishness wounds unity, pride weakens communion, and impatience dims love. Therefore, as we prepare to celebrate these sacred mysteries, let us ask the Lord to heal whatever divides hearts and to make us instruments of the unity and peace that come from Him alone.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You prayed that all may be one as You and the Father are one: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You teach us that love becomes holy when it is self-giving and faithful: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You pour out the Holy Spirit to unite hearts in peace and communion: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God,
who calls us into the communion of His divine love,
forgive the selfishness that divides us,
heal the wounds that burden our hearts,
strengthen us in unity and peace, and bring us to everlasting life.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God, whose eternal life is perfect communion
of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, look with love upon N. and N.,
who today begin their married life before Your altar.
Teach them to reflect in their home
the unity, tenderness, and faithfulness
that flow from Your divine heart, so that their love may become
a living sign of Your 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 violin maker once crafted a magnificent instrument. Years later, someone asked him, “What is the secret of its beautiful sound?” He answered, “The secret is not in the wood alone. It is in the harmony between tension and touch. Tighten the strings too much and they snap; leave them too loose and they make no music. Love is the art of sacred harmony.”

That is exactly what Jesus speaks about in today’s Gospel:
“That they may all be one.”

Marriage is not merely about two people sharing a house, a name, or a future. Marriage is about learning harmony — the harmony that exists in the heart of God Himself. The Trinity is not a mathematical puzzle. The Trinity is a communion of love. The Father gives Himself completely to the Son; the Son receives and returns that love completely; and the Holy Spirit is the living unity between them.

And today, dear N. and N., God invites you into that mystery.

The world often defines love as emotion, chemistry, or convenience. But emotions rise and fall like tides. Christian love is deeper. It is a daily decision to say:

“I will seek your good even when it costs me.”

That is Trinitarian love.

There is an old story about three elderly monks living in a tiny monastery. They had almost nothing, but they were always joyful. A visitor once asked them, “How do you avoid conflicts living together for so many years?” One monk smiled and said, “Every morning we

ask: 'How can I make the other two happy today?' That question saved our community."

That question can save a marriage too.

A marriage breaks not usually because love disappears suddenly, but because self slowly occupies the centre. The Trinity teaches the opposite: love survives where each person makes room for the other.

Saint Paul today says:

"Live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you."

Notice carefully: peace is not merely the absence of arguments. Some homes are silent but cold. Real peace is the presence of understanding, forgiveness, listening, gentleness, and prayer. Peace grows where pride dies.

A husband once complained to an elderly priest, "Father, my wife and I argue over little things every day." The priest asked, "Who wins?"

The man replied, "Neither of us."

The priest smiled sadly and said, "Then the devil wins every time."

Dear friends, in marriage, the goal is never victory over each other; it is victory for each other.

And Jesus gives the deepest reason for unity:

"So that the world may believe."

A holy marriage becomes a sermon without words. Children learn God first not from catechisms but from watching how their parents

speak, forgive, pray, and sacrifice. A united marriage becomes a window through which others glimpse heaven.

N. and N., there will be days when love feels effortless and radiant. There will also be days of exhaustion, misunderstanding, sickness, disappointment, and tears. In those moments, remember this: the Trinity never stops giving. God never withdraws His love when love becomes costly.

There is a beautiful legend about a cathedral destroyed by fire. Everything collapsed except one crucifix hanging above the altar. Burned beneath it were the words: "Love never left."

That is Christian marriage.

When beauty fades, when strength weakens, when storms arrive — love remains.

And perhaps one day, many years from now, people may not remember the decorations of this wedding day, the flowers, or even the music. But they will remember whether your marriage became a place where people encountered kindness, prayer, unity, laughter, mercy, and God.

A fisherman once said that during storms at sea, sailors survive not because the waves become smaller, but because the anchor holds. Dear N. and N., anchor your marriage in God. If Christ remains at the centre, your love will not merely survive — it will become a reflection of heaven itself.

And when your lives are complete, may it be said of your marriage what Jesus said of His disciples:

"They were one."

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

United in Christ, who prayed that all may be one, let us bring before our heavenly Father the needs of the Church, the world, and this newly married couple.

1. For the Church throughout the world, that she may become an ever clearer sign of unity, reconciliation, and self-giving love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. For N. and N., that their marriage may reflect the faithful love of the Holy Trinity and become a source of peace and blessing to all who enter their home, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
3. For married couples who struggle with misunderstanding, loneliness, or wounded trust, that the Lord may heal and strengthen them in unity and forgiveness, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
4. For families throughout the world, especially children growing up in difficult homes, that they may experience love, protection, and peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
5. For all gathered here today, that we may learn to love selflessly and become instruments of communion in a divided world, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of love and peace,
You created us for communion with You and with one another. Hear the prayers we place before You today and keep us united in Your 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 divine love reflected in the union of N. and N., 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 revealed Yourself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
an eternal communion of perfect unity and peace.
And in the covenant of Christian marriage
You invite husband and wife
to reflect that divine mystery through faithful love,
mutual self-giving, and joyful communion.

Today You bless N. and N.,
that their home may become a living sign of Your presence,
their fidelity a witness to Your enduring love,
and their unity a light to all who seek peace.

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 calls us into the unity of His own divine life:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for these newly married spouses, N.
and N., that He who has brought them together today may unite
them always in love.

Holy Father, creator of the universe and source of all true love,
pour out the grace of Your Holy Spirit upon N. and N.
Grant that their marriage may reflect
the faithful communion of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Teach them to seek one another's good,
to forgive generously, to carry one another's burdens,
and to remain steadfast in every season of life.

Bless their home with prayer, joy, and peace.
May they welcome one another each day
with tenderness and gratitude.
In moments of trial, strengthen them;
in moments of happiness, keep them humble and thankful.
Grant also that they may be blessed with children,
and become loving parents
who guide their family in wisdom and faith.
And after a long and fruitful life together,
may they come with all whom they love
into the eternal communion of Your heavenly kingdom.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.
May the homes of Your faithful become reflections of the unity and
love of the Holy Trinity, where forgiveness is stronger than anger and
communion stronger than division.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who unites us in one body through His love and sacrifice.
Happy are those invited to live in communion with Him
and with one another.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love becomes holy when it learns to give itself away.
Today Christ has entered not only this altar
but also the covenant of N. and N.
The Trinity is now the silent guest within their marriage.
May their home become a place where prayer is natural,
forgiveness is quick, laughter is frequent,
and God is never a stranger.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of Your divine love,
we ask You, Lord,
to strengthen N. and N. in the grace of this sacrament.
May the communion they have received today
teach them to live in unity, patience, and faithful love,
so that their marriage may become
a living reflection of Your eternal communion.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Father, whose love gives life to the world,
fill your hearts with peace and unity. **Amen.**
May the Son, who prayed that all may be one,
strengthen you in fidelity and self-giving love. **Amen.**
May the Holy Spirit, bond of eternal communion,
make your home a place of joy, forgiveness, and holiness. **Amen.**
And may almighty God bless all of you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by lives of unity,
faithful love, and joyful communion.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A marriage becomes holy
not when two people look only at each other,
but when together they look toward God
and learn to love as He loves.”

89. Marriage as Communion, Not Competition

Phil 2:1–4; Mk 9:33–37

Theme: “Marriage as Communion, Not Competition”

True Christian marriage is not a contest about who wins, leads, controls, or shines more brightly. It is a sacred communion where two people kneel low enough to raise each other higher. In Christ, greatness is measured not by power, but by humble love and joyful service.

INTRODUCTION

In ancient Greece, runners in relay races carried a flaming torch. The victory did not belong to the fastest individual but to the team that protected the flame together until the finish line. One careless runner could extinguish the fire for everyone. Marriage is much like that. A husband and wife are not competing in separate lanes trying to outshine one another; they are entrusted with one flame — the flame of love, trust, tenderness, and faith. The real triumph of marriage is not “I won,” but “we remained together.”

Saint Paul today pleads: “*Do nothing out of selfish ambition.*” And in the Gospel, Jesus catches His disciples arguing about who is the greatest. Even among those closest to Him, competition had quietly entered the heart. Yet Jesus places a child in their midst — small, dependent, trusting — and teaches that love grows where pride becomes small enough to serve.

As we gather to celebrate this wedding, we also recognize how often selfishness, comparison, wounded pride, and the desire to be right can weaken communion in families and relationships. Let us therefore come before the Lord with humble hearts and ask for His mercy and peace.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You teach us that greatness is found in humble service:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You call husbands and wives to become one heart and one spirit in love: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You place the weak and little ones at the centre of Your Kingdom and teach us to love without rivalry: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May Almighty God, who calls us from pride into communion, from selfishness into self-giving love, heal every wound of division within us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

O God, who have taught us through Your Son that true greatness is found in humility and loving service, look with kindness upon N. and N., who today enter the covenant of Holy Matrimony. Grant that their home may never become a place of rivalry or division, but a communion of mutual respect, tenderness, forgiveness, and peace.

Teach them to carry one another's burdens with joy and to reflect the selfless love of Christ in all they do.

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 monk once visited an old married couple who had lived together for over sixty years. He asked them, "How did you stay together for so long?"

The old wife smiled and replied, "We came from a generation that repaired things instead of replacing them."

That is the wisdom hidden inside today's Gospel.

The disciples are walking with Jesus, but instead of speaking about love, sacrifice, or compassion, they are arguing about who among them is the greatest. Imagine that scene. Grown men competing for importance while walking beside the One who would soon carry a cross. And Jesus does something astonishing: He places a little child in the centre.

In that culture, children had no status, no power, no influence. Yet Jesus says, in effect: "If you want greatness, learn to welcome the small, the vulnerable, the unnoticed."

Marriage fails the moment spouses begin keeping score:

"I apologized last time."

"I sacrifice more."

"I work harder."

"I give more love."

Love dies where scorecards begin.

A psychologist once asked couples nearing divorce a simple question: "When did your marriage begin to weaken?" Most did not mention one dramatic betrayal. Instead, they spoke of tiny

competitions:

Who was more tired.

Who earned more.

Who sacrificed more.

Who deserved more appreciation.

Competition quietly poisoned communion.

Saint Paul today gives the antidote:

“Consider others better than yourselves.”

Not because one person is inferior, but because love chooses humility over ego.

Real marriage is not two stars trying to dominate the same sky. It is more like two hands washing each other. One hand cannot say, “I am cleaner than the other.” Their beauty is in serving one another.

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 on this pilgrimage, there will be moments of misunderstanding, exhaustion, financial stress, sickness, disappointments, and tears. There will be days when saying “sorry” feels harder than climbing a mountain. Yet the holiest couples are not those who never struggle; they are those who refuse to stop choosing each other.

A priest once spoke about visiting a dying man in hospital. The man could barely speak. His wife sat beside him silently holding his hand. After a while the priest asked her, “What are you saying to him?”

She answered, “Nothing. After fifty years, our love no longer needs competition for words.”

That is communion.

Dear N. and N., today the Church is not asking you to become perfect. The Church is asking you to become one. And unity is built not through power, but through daily acts of humility:

listening when tired,

forgiving when hurt,

remaining faithful when tested,

and serving when it is inconvenient.

The world often says:

“Find someone who makes you happy.”

Christ says:

“Become someone who helps the other become holy.”

That is deeper than romance.

That is covenant.

And remember this: every marriage teaches the world something about God. A competitive marriage teaches fear. A divided marriage teaches loneliness. But a marriage rooted in communion teaches the Gospel itself.

Let me end with a story.

After a severe earthquake in Japan, rescuers found an elderly couple trapped beneath collapsed debris. The husband had stretched his body over his wife to protect her from falling concrete. When

rescuers pulled them out, they asked him, “Why did you do that?”
The old man answered quietly, “Because in marriage, her pain became my pain.”

That is communion.

That is the love Christ has for His Church.

And that is the love to which you are called today.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Jesus teaches us that greatness is found in humble love and service. Trusting in His mercy and guidance, let us now bring before Him the prayers of the Church and of this newly married couple.

1. For the Church: that she may always witness to unity, humility, and compassion in a divided world, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For N. and N.: that their marriage may always be a communion of hearts and never a competition of egos, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

3. For married couples everywhere: that in moments of tension and misunderstanding they may choose forgiveness over pride and love over resentment, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For families and children: that homes may become places where tenderness, patience, and mutual respect are learned and lived, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all who feel lonely, wounded, or burdened in relationships: that Christ may heal their hearts and surround them

with faithful companionship, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father,

You have called us into communion with You and with one another.

Hear these prayers we place before You today,

and strengthen us to live in humble and 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 covenant of love begun today, and for the grace to live not in rivalry but in communion and self-giving service, 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 not as rivals but as companions, helping one another toward holiness through mutual love and sacrifice.

In Christ Your Son

You revealed that true greatness is found in humble service, and You made the covenant of marriage a living sign of His faithful love for the Church.

Today You unite N. and N. in this sacred bond,
calling them to build a home rooted in patience, forgiveness,
tenderness, and peace,
so that their communion may reflect the unity of heaven itself.

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

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

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

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for these newly married spouses,
that He may graciously pour out His blessing upon them
and make them one in heart and mind.

Holy Father, creator of all love and source of all communion,
look with kindness upon N. and N.,
who today have joined their lives before Your altar.

Grant that they may never seek to overcome one another,
but always strive to uplift and strengthen each other.
Teach them to be patient in trials, gentle in speech,
faithful in commitment, and generous in forgiveness.
May their home be filled with prayer,
laughter, tenderness, and peace.

When burdens grow heavy, may they carry them together.
When joy overflows, may they share it gratefully.
When wounds arise, may reconciliation come quickly.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may lovingly welcome new life
and raise their family in wisdom, faith, and compassion.
May their marriage become
a sign of Christ's selfless love for the Church,
so that all who encounter them
may see the beauty of faithful communion.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.
Teach us especially within marriage and family life to choose
communion over competition, humility over pride,
and reconciliation over division.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
who teaches us that true greatness is found
in humble love and service.
Behold him who calls this couple into a communion
that reflects His own faithful love for the Church.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love grows beautiful not through grand achievements alone,
but through quiet daily sacrifices.
A marriage becomes holy in small moments: listening patiently,
speaking kindly, forgiving quickly, praying together,
and choosing each other again and again.
Christ whom we have received in this Eucharist
now becomes the strength of this new communion of life and love.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of Your Son, we pray, O Lord,
that N. and N. may be strengthened by this heavenly food
to live their marriage in unity, humility, and enduring love.
May this sacrament deepen their communion with You
and with one another,
so that their home may become a witness of peace,
faithfulness, and joyful service. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you united in heart and spirit.
Amen.
May He teach you to seek not your own advantage but the good of
one another, and fill your home with lasting peace. **Amen.**
May He bless your love with fidelity, joy, and the gift of children, and
make your family a sign of His presence 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 building a marriage rooted not in competition,
but in communion, humility, and faithful love.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

A successful marriage is not built by two people
trying to win against each other,
but by two people choosing every day to protect the “us”
that God has entrusted to them.

90. The Courage to Begin Again After Failure

Lam 3:22–23; Jn 21:15–19

Theme: “Love Begins Again: Mercy Stronger Than Failure”

INTRODUCTION

A famous Japanese art called *kintsugi* repairs broken pottery with gold. Instead of hiding the cracks, the artist fills them with gold lacquer so that the broken places become the most beautiful part of the vessel. The message is powerful: brokenness does not end the story. What has been wounded can become more precious when touched by patient love.

Today’s readings speak exactly that language. In Lamentations, written in the middle of ruin and grief, we hear an astonishing proclamation: “*The mercies of the Lord are not exhausted; they are new every morning.*” In the Gospel, Peter stands before Jesus after his terrible failure. He had denied the Lord three times. Yet Jesus does not shame him, reject him, or replace him. Instead, Christ gives Peter a new beginning through love.

Every marriage will eventually discover that love is not only about beautiful beginnings but also about courageous new beginnings. There will be misunderstandings, weaknesses, disappointments, and moments when one must choose forgiveness over pride. As we begin this Eucharist, let us ask the Lord to heal whatever is wounded within us, teach us mercy, and renew our hearts in love.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You never tire of lifting those who fall:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You renew love when hearts grow weak and weary:

Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, You call us again and again to follow You in faithfulness and mercy: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, whose mercies are new every morning, forgive us our sins, heal the wounds caused by selfishness and pride, strengthen us to begin again in love whenever we fail, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

Merciful and faithful God,
You revealed Your compassion in restoring Peter after his failure and You continue to renew Your people with tenderness and grace. Look kindly upon N. and N.,
who today entrust their love to You in the covenant of marriage. Teach them to forgive quickly, to rise again after every trial, and to discover that true love grows stronger through mercy. May their home become a place of healing, peace, and steadfast hope.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A small boy once broke his grandmother's favourite vase while playing in the house. Terrified, he hid the broken pieces behind a cupboard and said nothing. For days he avoided his grandmother because he feared her anger. Finally, with tears in his eyes, he confessed: "Grandma, I broke your vase." The old woman smiled gently and said, "I knew it was broken the first day. I was only waiting for you to come back to me."

That is one of the deepest truths about love: real love waits for return more than it waits for perfection.

In today's Gospel, Peter stands before Jesus carrying the unbearable memory of failure. On the night of the Passion, Peter had loudly promised loyalty, but when fear arrived, courage disappeared. Three times he denied even knowing Jesus. Imagine the shame Peter carried after hearing the rooster crow.

And yet, when the risen Jesus meets Peter by the sea, He does not begin with accusation. He begins with breakfast. Fire. Bread. Fish. Presence. Mercy often begins quietly.

Then Jesus asks three times: "*Do you love me?*"

Not: "Why did you fail me?"

Not: "How could you betray me?"

But: "Do you love me?"

Because in God's eyes, failure is never the final word. Love is.

Marriage will one day bring both of you to your own "shore of Galilee" moments. There will be days when one of you speaks carelessly,

becomes impatient, forgets tenderness, or grows tired under pressure. The danger in marriage is not failure itself. Every human being fails. The danger is allowing pride to become greater than love.

A married couple once celebrated fifty years together. Someone asked the wife, "In all those years, did you ever think of divorce?" She answered, "Divorce? No. Murder? A few times." Everyone laughed because they recognized something true: lasting love is not the absence of difficulty; it is the refusal to stop choosing each other.

The Book of Lamentations was written in a time of devastation. Jerusalem was in ruins. Everything seemed lost. Yet from the ashes comes one of the Bible's greatest declarations of hope: "*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies are new every morning.*"

Every morning.

Not once a year.

Not only after major sins.

Every morning.

That is how Christian marriage survives. Not by pretending to be perfect, but by learning the sacred art of beginning again.

There is an old story about a monk who asked his elder, "What do we do when we fall?" The elder replied, "We rise." The monk asked again, "And what if we fall again?" The elder answered, "Then we rise again." Finally the monk asked, "How long must we keep rising?" The old man smiled and said, "Until God calls us home."

That is marriage. Falling and rising together. Hurting and healing together. Learning that mercy is not weakness but strength.

N. and N., today you are not promising that you will never fail each other. You are promising something deeper: that with God's grace you will never stop returning to each other.

And remember this: Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me?" beside a charcoal fire—the very kind of fire near which Peter had denied Him. Christ returned Peter to the place of failure, not to humiliate him, but to heal him. God often transforms the very place of our weakness into the place of our mission.

A firefighter once said that after a forest fire, the ground looks dead and ruined. But months later, hidden seeds begin to grow because certain seeds only open after intense heat. Sometimes what seems destroyed is actually preparing for deeper life.

So it will be in marriage. The moments that test you most may become the moments that deepen your love most.

Today Christ says to both of you what He once said to Peter: "You will fail at times. But do not run away. Stay with Me. Love again. Begin again. Follow Me."

And that is the miracle of Christian love: not that two perfect people found each other, but that two imperfect people place their future into the hands of a merciful God.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Trusting in the mercy of God, whose compassion is renewed every morning, 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 reveal the face of Christ who forgives, restores, and gives new beginnings, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For N. and N., that their marriage may be rooted in patience, strengthened by forgiveness, and renewed daily through love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples who struggle with disappointment, hurt, or broken trust, that God may heal their wounds and help them begin again with hope, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For families burdened by division, resentment, or silence, that reconciliation and peace may return to their homes, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all of us gathered here, that we may never lose faith in God's mercy and may become instruments of compassion for one another, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father,
You restored Peter after his failure
and never cease to renew us with Your grace.
Hear the prayers we place before You today
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, offered in gratitude for God's mercy and for the new beginning granted to N. and N. in the Sacrament 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 great mercy
You never abandon those who fall,
but lovingly call them back to Yourself.
In Christ Your Son,
You revealed a love stronger than sin,
a forgiveness deeper than human weakness,
and a hope that rises even after failure.

Today You bless N. and N.
and unite them in the covenant of marriage,
that through patience, fidelity, and mercy
their love may reflect the faithful love of Christ for His Church.
Teach them to forgive as they have been forgiven
and to begin anew whenever trials arise.

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

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At every new beginning,
God reminds us that we are His beloved children.
With confidence in the Father
whose mercies are new every morning,
let us pray in the words Jesus Himself taught us:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

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

Holy Father, creator of love and source of mercy,
look with kindness upon these your servants
who have joined their lives in the Sacrament of Marriage.

Grant that they may remain faithful to one another
not only in moments of joy but also in times of weakness and trial.
When misunderstandings arise, teach them reconciliation;
when disappointments come, teach them patience;
and when they fail, give them the courage to begin again in love.

May their home be filled with prayer, peace, and tenderness.
May they strengthen one another in faith,
carry each other's burdens with generosity,
and always find their way back to each other and to You.

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

and rejoice together as a family rooted in Your grace.
May their love grow deeper with the passing years
until they come at last to the eternal wedding feast of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.
Strengthen all married couples with the grace to forgive quickly,
rise after failure, and preserve the peace
that comes from merciful love.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world and restores us through mercy.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love becomes holy not because it is perfect,
but because it allows God to heal it again and again.
Today Christ has nourished us with His own Body and Blood—
the ultimate sign that brokenness can become blessing.
May N. and N. always remember that whenever love grows tired,
grace is never exhausted. God's mercies are new every morning.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord our God, in this Eucharist You have nourished us
with the sacrament of reconciliation and love.
Strengthen N. and N. in their marriage,
that through the grace they have received today
they may persevere in fidelity, practice mercy toward one another,
and never lose courage in times of trial.
May their love continue to be renewed each day by Your presence.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord, who restored Peter through mercy,
strengthen your hearts whenever you stumble
and fill your home with forgiveness and peace. **Amen.**
May Christ, who makes all things new, renew your love day after day
and keep you faithful in joy and in trial. **Amen.**
May the Holy Spirit,
the bond of perfect love,
help you always begin again with courage, patience, and hope.
Amen.
And may almighty God bless all of you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by lives marked with mercy,
forgiveness, and the courage to begin again.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A strong marriage is not one that never falls,
but one that never stops rising again through mercy,
forgiveness, and love.”

91. Blessing One Another Daily

Num 6:24–26; Lk 24:50–53

Theme: “A Marriage that Blesses: Becoming God’s Blessing to One Another Every Day”

INTRODUCTION

A Jewish grandfather once told his grandson, “Before I sleep every night, I bless your grandmother.” The boy laughed and asked, “After fifty years of marriage, what new blessing is left to say?” The old man smiled gently and replied, “Every morning she wakes up carrying burdens I cannot see. Every night I remind her she does not carry them alone.”

Real love is not sustained only by romance, but by blessing — by speaking life, strength, forgiveness, and hope into another person day after day.

In the First Reading, God teaches His people the language of blessing: “*The Lord bless you and keep you.*” In the Gospel, Jesus ascends into heaven not with fear or anger, but with uplifted hands blessing His disciples. The last visible gesture of Jesus on earth was a blessing. Today, N. and N. are called to make their marriage a daily blessing to one another and to all who enter their home.

Yet we know that there are moments when our words wound more than heal, when silence replaces encouragement, and when pride prevents tenderness. Therefore, to prepare ourselves 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 bless us even when we are undeserving and weak: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You call husbands and wives to speak words that heal and strengthen: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You raise Your hands in blessing over Your people and never abandon them: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May Almighty God,
who never ceases to bless His children with mercy and compassion,
forgive us for the harsh words we have spoken,
the love we have withheld,
and the blessings we have failed to give one another;
may He heal our hearts, strengthen our love,
and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

O God, source of every blessing and enduring love,
who taught us through Your Son
that hearts lifted in blessing become instruments of peace,
look with kindness upon N. and N.,
and grant that through patience, tenderness, and daily acts of love,
they may reflect Your goodness in their marriage
and become a blessing to all around them.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A nurse in a hospice once noticed something remarkable. Many dying patients spoke not about achievements, money, or success. Again and again, they remembered simple words spoken years earlier: “I am proud of you.” “I forgive you.” “I am with you.” Some spent their final days longing to hear a blessing they never received.

Words shape souls.

That is why today’s readings are profoundly beautiful for a wedding. In the Book of Numbers, God Himself teaches Moses how to bless people:

“The Lord bless you and keep you.”

Notice this carefully: God does not merely give things; He gives Himself. His face shines upon His people. His presence becomes their peace.

And in the Gospel, the final earthly action of Jesus before ascending into heaven is deeply moving: He raises His hands and blesses His disciples. The last memory they carried of Jesus was not of nails, wounds, or suffering — but of blessing.

N. and N., this is your vocation today: to become God’s blessing for each other.

Not only on anniversaries.

Not only when life is easy.

But daily.

There is an old story of a couple married for over sixty years. Every morning the husband would place his hand gently on his wife’s

shoulder before leaving for work and say, “Thank you for walking through life with me.” One day a visitor asked the wife, “Doesn’t it become repetitive after all these years?” Tears filled her eyes as she answered, “No. Because every day I need to hear that I am cherished.”

That is blessing.

Blessing is not magic words. It is choosing every day to speak life instead of discouragement. It is refusing sarcasm that humiliates. It is learning that tone matters. Some homes become emotionally cold not because love disappeared, but because blessing disappeared.

A rabbi once said, “A house without blessing slowly becomes a shelter instead of a home.”

And perhaps this is why Jesus blessed His disciples before leaving. He knew the world would wound them. He knew they would face fear, failure, and loneliness. So He left them with blessing — because blessed hearts survive storms better.

Marriage will also have storms.

There will be days when exhaustion replaces romance. Days when misunderstandings arise. Days when one feels unheard. In those moments, the easiest thing is criticism. But holy couples learn another language — the language of blessing.

Sometimes blessing sounds like:

“I forgive you.” “I understand.”

“We will get through this.” “I still choose you.”

A teacher once asked children, “What makes a family strong?” One little girl answered, “When people inside the house speak kindly even after a hard day.” That child understood something many adults forget.

N. and N., never underestimate the spiritual power of your words. The way you speak to one another will slowly shape the atmosphere of your marriage. Your home can become a place where souls heal.

And your blessing must overflow beyond yourselves — to future children, to guests, to the lonely, to the poor, to anyone who enters your lives. The happiest marriages are not those that close in on themselves, but those that become channels of grace for others.

Let me end with this.

A grandfather was once asked the secret of his long marriage. He pointed to an old wooden chair near the window and said, “Every evening my wife sat there, and before sleeping I blessed her silently. Even on days we argued. Even on days we disappointed each other. Because love survives where blessing continues.”

Years later, after she died, he still touched that empty chair before going to bed.

That is love.

That is holiness.

That is marriage.

And may the last memory you give one another each day never be bitterness, silence, or anger — but blessing.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrating God’s love revealed in the covenant of marriage, let us now bring before Him our prayers for this couple and for the whole Church.

1. For the Church throughout the world, that she may continue to raise her hands in blessing over all wounded families and become a sign of hope and mercy, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For N. and N., that their words may always strengthen, heal, and encourage one another, and that their home may radiate peace and kindness, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples experiencing trials, misunderstandings, or loneliness, that God may renew tenderness in their hearts and restore joy to their homes, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

4. For future children blessed to this marriage, that they may grow surrounded by faith, wisdom, and love, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

5. For all gathered here, that we may become people who bless rather than wound, forgive rather than condemn, and encourage rather than discourage, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father,

You never cease to bless Your people with mercy and peace. Hear these prayers we offer with confidence and make our lives reflections of Your goodness. 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 for the blessing poured upon N. and N., 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 a blessing for one another.
In the covenant of marriage
You reveal the tenderness of Your own faithful love,
teaching us that words spoken with kindness,
hearts formed by forgiveness, and lives shared in generosity
become signs of Your presence in the world.

And through Christ Your Son,
who lifted His hands in blessing over His disciples,
You continue to strengthen all married couples
to persevere in unity, joy, and peace.

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 continually blesses His children and calls us to become blessings to one another:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for N. and N.,
who today begin their married life at His altar,
that He may fill them with His grace and peace.

O God,
who by Your mighty power created all things
and in Your loving wisdom made marriage
a sacred sign of Your faithful love,
look with favour upon N. and N.

May they daily bless one another
with patience in moments of trial,
with tenderness in moments of weakness,
and with gratitude in moments of joy.
May their words bring healing,
their home radiate peace,
and their hearts remain open to forgiveness.

Grant that they may walk together in faith,
support one another in every burden,
and rejoice together in all the blessings of life.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may be loving parents
who guide their family in wisdom and holiness.

And after a long and happy life together on earth,
may they come with all who love them
to the eternal banquet of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.
May the peace You gave
while raising Your hands in blessing over Your disciples
dwell also in this marriage and make this home a refuge of kindness,
reconciliation, and hope.
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 learn to bless and forgive in love.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love grows where blessing continues.
Today Christ has nourished us with His own life
so that we may become nourishment for one another.
A marriage becomes holy not through grand gestures alone,
but through daily kindness, patient listening, quiet forgiveness,
and faithful encouragement.
May N. and N. always remember
that every loving word spoken in sincerity
becomes a small reflection of God's own blessing upon the world.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of Your heavenly blessing,
we pray, O Lord,
that N. and N., strengthened by the Body and Blood of Christ,
may remain steadfast in love, generous in mercy,
and constant in speaking peace to one another.
May their marriage reveal Your compassion to the world
and become a joyful witness to enduring love.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.
May He turn His countenance toward you and give you peace.
May He strengthen N. and N.
to bless one another all the days of their lives,
to remain faithful in joy and sorrow,
and to fill their home with kindness and hope.
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 kindness you show,
the forgiveness you offer,
and the blessings you speak to one another each day.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A happy marriage is built not only by saying ‘I love you,’
but by daily becoming God’s blessing to one another.”

92. Christian Marriage and Social Responsibility

Micah 6:8; Mt 25:31–40

Theme: “A Marriage that Opens Its Doors to Christ in Others”

Christian marriage is not only about loving one another privately, but about becoming together a visible sign of God’s justice, compassion, and mercy in the world. The love shared in the home must overflow into service of the poor, the forgotten, and the vulnerable, for “whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did for me.”

INTRODUCTION

In 1963, after a terrible snowstorm in Europe, a small village discovered that an elderly widow had died alone in her cold house. What shocked the villagers most was not that she died poor, but that every day people had passed her door. They all assumed someone else had checked on her. At her funeral, one old man whispered, “We were a village beside her, but not a village for her.” That sentence became a wound in the conscience of the town.

Marriage can become like that village. Two people may live side by side, building a beautiful life, yet forget that God never blesses love so that it may close in on itself. Christian marriage is meant to become a home with windows open to the suffering of the world. Micah speaks clearly today: “Act justly, love tenderly, walk humbly with your God.” And Jesus tells us that He hides Himself in the hungry, the lonely, and the forgotten.

As we begin this Eucharist, let us ask pardon for the times we have failed to recognize Christ in others, for moments when our love became self-centered, and for the occasions when we passed by human need without compassion. And so we pray.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You teach us that love must become mercy and justice for others: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You reveal Yourself in the hungry, the stranger, and the poor: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You call every Christian family to become a light for the world: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May Almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins, heal every hardness of heart,
teach us to recognize Christ in one another
and in those most in need, and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God,
who have called this couple
to reflect Your compassion and justice in the world,
grant that their marriage may become
a dwelling place of kindness, generosity, and faithful love,
so that all who encounter them
may discover the presence of Christ alive among them.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

HOMILY

A journalist once asked Mother Teresa, “What is the greatest problem in the world today?” People expected her to speak about war, famine, or disease. Instead, she answered quietly: “The feeling of being unwanted.”

That is where today’s Gospel begins.

Jesus does not speak about extraordinary miracles at the final judgment. He speaks about ordinary humanity: feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, visiting the sick, clothing the naked. In other words, salvation is measured not only by prayer spoken with the lips, but by love made visible in daily life.

Dear couple, today your marriage is not simply the union of two hearts. It is the creation of a new mission in the world. From today onward, your love is meant to become shelter for others.

There is an old Jewish story about a rabbi who asked his students, “When does night end and day begin?” One student said, “When you can distinguish a sheep from a dog.” Another answered, “When you can see the trees clearly.” The rabbi said, “No. Day begins when you look into the face of another person and recognize your brother or sister. Until then, it is still night.”

That is exactly what Jesus says in today’s Gospel. The tragedy of the condemned is not cruelty alone — it is blindness. “Lord, when did we see you hungry?” They never recognized Him because they never truly saw people.

Marriage can also become blind. Couples can become so consumed with careers, comfort, schedules, mortgages, achievements, and social status that their home slowly closes its doors to compassion. But a Christian home must never become a fortress; it must become a table with extra chairs.

I once heard of a couple celebrating fifty years of marriage. Someone asked them the secret of their happiness. The husband replied, "Every Friday we kept one empty chair at dinner." The guests were puzzled. He explained: "That chair reminded us that our family was never meant to exist only for ourselves. Sometimes a lonely student sat there. Sometimes a grieving neighbour. Sometimes a struggling relative. The empty chair saved our marriage from becoming selfish."

What a beautiful image of Christian marriage.

Micah gives us three pillars today: act justly, love tenderly, walk humbly with God.

Act justly — because love cannot ignore suffering.

Love tenderly — because justice without compassion becomes cold.

Walk humbly — because marriage survives not through pride, but through forgiveness and grace.

Dear couple, there will be days when romance feels easy and days when love feels costly. On difficult days, remember this: the strongest marriages are not those that look inward all the time, but those that kneel together before God and stand together beside the suffering.

There is another story from the life of Saint Francis of Assisi. One winter night he gave his cloak to a freezing beggar. Later he told his brothers, "The cold left me the moment I covered him." That is the mystery of Christian love: when love is given away, it grows warmer instead of smaller.

Your marriage will flourish not merely because you love each other, but because together you love beyond yourselves.

And one day, when the years have passed, when beauty fades and strength weakens, may Christ say to you not only, "You loved one another," but also: "I was hungry and you fed me. I was lonely and you welcomed me. I was suffering and you stood beside me." And may you discover then that every act of mercy became another brick in the kingdom of heaven.

A priest once visited an elderly dying man. Near his bed stood worn-out shoes covered in dust. The priest asked, "Were you a traveller?" The old man smiled weakly and said, "No. I simply spent my life going wherever someone needed me." That is holiness. And that is the vocation of Christian marriage.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrating this covenant of love, let us now pray to God the Father, that this couple may reflect Christ's compassion in the world and become a blessing to all whom they meet.

1. For the Church, that she may continue to defend the dignity of the poor, the forgotten, and the vulnerable, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For this newly married couple, that their home may always remain open to generosity, hospitality, and mercy, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

3. For families burdened by poverty, loneliness, illness, or division, that they may receive support and hope through loving communities, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For all who serve the needy — caregivers, social workers, missionaries, and volunteers — that Christ may strengthen them in compassion, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For ourselves gathered here, that we may recognize Christ in those who suffer and respond with generous hearts, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of mercy,
You reveal Your Son in the least and the forgotten.
Hear the prayers we place before You today,
and make our lives signs of Your compassion.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

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

PREFACE

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

For You created man and woman in love
and called them to walk together in fidelity and grace.
In Christian marriage You reveal
that love is never meant to remain closed within itself,
but must become mercy for the suffering
and hope for the forgotten.

In this union You bless this couple today
so that their home may become a refuge for the weary,
a table for the lonely,
and a witness to Christ present among His people.

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

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

United as one family in Christ,
and remembering that every person is our brother
and sister in the Lord,
let us pray with confidence to the Father
whose love calls every home to become a place of mercy,
welcome, and compassion.
And so, at the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
we dare to say:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for this bride and groom,
who come today to begin their married life at God's altar,
that He may bless them with unity of heart and generous love.

O God,
who have joined these two in the covenant of marriage,
pour out upon them the riches of Your grace.
May their home become a place of welcome,
their table a place of sharing,
and their hearts attentive to the cries of those in need.

Teach them to recognize Christ in one another
and in every person they encounter.
When trials come, strengthen them with patience;
when joys abound, keep them humble and grateful.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may lovingly raise them in faith, compassion, and wisdom,
and may their family become a living sign
of Your presence in the world.

Grant that after a long and faithful life together,
surrounded by those they have loved and served,
they may come at last to the 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 this couple become instruments of Your peace by bringing
compassion, reconciliation, and hope wherever they go.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold Him who comes to us in the poor, the weak,
and the forgotten.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love becomes holy when it becomes bread for others.
Today this couple has received not only the sacrament of marriage,
but also the Eucharistic Christ, who gave His life for the world.
The deepest beauty of marriage is discovered
when husband and wife become together a blessing for others —
comforting the sorrowful, welcoming the lonely, and lifting the
burdens of the weary.
A marriage centred only on itself eventually grows small.
But a marriage opened to God and to others
becomes wide enough for heaven to enter.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of Your Son, we ask You, Lord, to strengthen this newly married couple with the grace of self-giving love.

May the sacrament they have received today teach them to serve one another faithfully and to recognize Christ in those most in need. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May He make your home a place of mercy and joy.
May He strengthen you to walk together in faithfulness, humility, and compassion.
May He bless your work, your family, your future children, and all those whose lives you will touch through 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 life, your love, and your service to others.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A Christian marriage becomes holy not only by how deeply two people love each other, but by how widely that love reaches others.”

93. The Importance of Sabbath and Rest for Families

Ex 20:8–11; Mk 2:27–28

Theme: “A Home that Knows How to Rest in God Will Know How to Love for a Lifetime.”

INTRODUCTION

There is a story of an old married couple who were once asked the secret of their fifty-eight years together. The husband smiled and said, “Every evening, no matter how hard the day was, we sat quietly for ten minutes before dinner. No phones, no television, no complaints. Just silence, prayer, and presence.” Their granddaughter once asked, “What happened during those ten minutes?” The grandmother answered, “That is where we stopped being workers and remembered we were family.” In a world that rewards constant activity, they discovered that love dies not only from hatred, but from exhaustion.

The readings today speak about Sabbath — not merely as a law, but as a gift. God rested, not because He was tired, but because love needs time to rejoice, to breathe, and to remain human. Jesus reminds us that the Sabbath was made for humanity. In marriage too, rest is holy. A family that never pauses together slowly forgets how to see one another deeply. The greatest poverty in many homes today is not lack of money, but lack of presence.

As we begin this sacred celebration, we recognize the times we allowed busyness to replace tenderness, noise to replace prayer, and pressure to replace peace. Let us ask the Lord for mercy, that this couple may build not merely a successful house, but a restful and grace-filled home.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You invite weary hearts to find rest in Your love:
Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You teach families to place God before work and communion before competition: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You are the peace that restores tired hearts and wounded homes: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us for the times we failed to love with patience and presence,
restore peace to our hearts and homes,
and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who in Your wisdom taught humanity
the sacred rhythm of work and rest,
look with love upon Your servants
who come before Your altar today in marriage.
Grant that their home may become
a dwelling of peace, prayer, joy, and renewal,
where love is strengthened in quiet moments
and hearts continually rest in You.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son,
who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A young boy once asked his father, “Dad, why do you always keep working even when you come home?” The father laughed and replied, “Because I want to give you a better life.” Years later, when the father had become successful but emotionally distant, the son said quietly, “Dad, I never wanted a better life. I just wanted more of you.” Sometimes the tragedy of love is not cruelty; it is absence.

Today’s readings speak to a world that has forgotten how to rest. God commands Sabbath in Exodus not as a burden, but as liberation. Slaves work without stopping. Machines never rest. But God did not create human beings to become machines. He created them for communion. The Sabbath says something profound: your value is not measured by productivity, but by relationship.

And this truth is crucial for marriage.

Many marriages do not collapse because there was no love at the beginning. They collapse because love slowly suffocated under schedules, fatigue, endless obligations, and emotional distraction. Couples begin by holding hands and end by only holding calendars.

There is a touching story about a woman whose husband worked constantly. One day she placed a framed photograph of their wedding day on his office desk. Beneath it she wrote only one sentence: “I miss the man in this picture.” That sentence pierced him more deeply than any argument. Sometimes the greatest cry in marriage is silent loneliness.

Jesus says in today’s Gospel, “The Sabbath was made for man.” Rest is not laziness. Rest is the protection of love. A family that

never prays together, eats together, laughs together, or sits quietly together will eventually become a house full of strangers.

Dear couple, protect your Sabbath moments. They may not always happen on Sundays alone. They happen whenever you intentionally choose each other over endless distractions. Turn off devices sometimes. Eat without hurry. Pray before sleep. Sit together after difficult days. Learn the sacred ministry of presence.

One elderly priest once visited a dying man who had been married for sixty-three years. The man whispered, “Father, we were poor all our life. We had many struggles. But every evening, before sleeping, my wife and I blessed each other with the sign of the cross. Now I realize — that was our real wealth.” Holiness in marriage is often hidden in ordinary rituals repeated faithfully through the years.

And there is another important truth here. Sabbath is not escape from life; it is restoration for life. Even Jesus withdrew to lonely places to pray. If Christ Himself paused, then every marriage must learn to pause. Otherwise wounds deepen, words harden, and hearts become tired.

Dear friends, the world will constantly tell this couple to achieve more, buy more, and do more. But heaven will ask something different: Did you remain present to one another? Did your home become a place where souls could breathe?

At the end of life, nobody says, “I wish I had spent more time at the office.” But many say, “I wish I had spent more time with those I love.”

There is a Jewish saying: “More than Israel kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath kept Israel.” In the same way, more than a couple protects moments of love and prayer, those moments will protect the marriage itself.

And so today, this wedding is not simply about building a future together. It is about building a home where God is welcomed, where peace is protected, where children may one day feel safe and loved, and where two souls learn to rest not only beside each other — but in God.

A nurse once recalled the final words of an old husband sitting beside his dying wife. Holding her fragile hand, he whispered, “My love, thank you for all the ordinary days.” That is the hidden beauty of marriage. Eternity is often built not in dramatic moments, but in faithful ordinary ones — meals shared, prayers whispered, tears comforted, silence understood, and love patiently renewed.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Trusting in God, who calls every family to become a place of peace and rest, let us bring before Him our prayers for this couple and for the whole world.

1. For the Church:

that she may continue to offer weary hearts the peace of Christ and teach families the beauty of prayer, rest, and communion, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For this newly married couple:

that their home may always be a sanctuary of tenderness,

forgiveness, joyful conversation, and restful trust in God, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For families burdened by stress, conflict, or loneliness: that the Lord may restore unity, healing, and quiet moments of reconciliation, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For working parents and all who struggle to balance responsibilities and relationships: that they may never lose sight of the people they love while providing for them, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For future children who may bless this marriage: that they may grow in faith, wisdom, security, and love within a peaceful Christian home, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of mercy and peace,
receive the prayers we place before You today.
Teach us to rest in Your love
so that our homes may become reflections of heaven.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice,
offered for a couple desiring to build their home upon prayer,
peace, and faithful love,
may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

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

For You created humanity in love
and taught us through the gift of Sabbath
that life finds its fullness not in endless labour
but in communion with You and with one another.

In the covenant of marriage
You call husband and wife
to become a refuge of peace in a restless world,
a home where burdens are shared,
where forgiveness renews hearts,
and where love is strengthened through prayer and presence.

Through Christ Your Son,
who welcomed the weary
and gave rest to all who came to Him,
You bless this couple today
and invite them to build their future upon Your 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 desires every home to become a place of peace,
mercy, and rest.

NUPTIAL BLESSING

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

Holy Father, creator of heaven and earth,
You made man and woman in Your image
and blessed their union with enduring love.
Pour out now the abundance of Your grace upon these newlyweds.
Grant that they may always find rest in one another's presence,
strength in times of burden, patience in moments of weakness,
and joy in the ordinary days of life together.

May their home become a place of prayer and welcome,
where peace is carefully guarded
and where Your name is spoken with faith and gratitude. Bless them
with children, that they may be loving parents
who guide their family in wisdom, tenderness, and faith.
When trials come, sustain them.
When success comes, keep them humble.
When age comes, keep them close to one another.
And after a lifetime of faithful love,
bring them with all whom they love
into the eternal Sabbath 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 our families to slow down enough
to recognize one another as gifts,
and make every Christian home a place
where weary hearts may find rest and healing.
Who live and reign for ever and ever. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

This is Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath, who invites weary
hearts to find rest and renewal in His love.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love grows not only in great celebrations,
but in quiet faithfulness.
The Eucharist we have received reminds us
that Christ remains present with us always.
May this couple learn that holiness is often found in simple moments
— shared meals, patient listening, evening prayers, reconciliations
after difficult days, and peaceful silence held together in love.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord our God, having nourished us with the Bread of Life, we ask You to strengthen this newly married couple in unity, peace, and enduring affection. May the grace of this sacrament help them to build a home rooted in prayer, renewed through forgiveness, and sustained by restful trust in You. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless your marriage with peace in busy days and calm in difficult moments. **Amen.**
May He teach you to protect time for one another, to pray together faithfully, and to find joy in ordinary life. **Amen.**
May your home become a refuge for your children, your family, your friends, and 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 building a home where love is protected, hearts are renewed, and God is never forgotten.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A successful marriage is not built only by working hard for each other, but by resting deeply with each other in God.”

94. Marriage and the Healing Power of Mercy

Col 3:12–14; Lk 15:1–7

Theme: “Mercy is the Healing Breath of Marriage.”

A Christian marriage does not survive because two people never wound each other, but because they continually choose compassion, forgiveness, tenderness, and reconciliation. Love becomes lasting when mercy becomes daily.

INTRODUCTION

In 1994, after the genocide in Rwanda, a woman named Immaculée Ilibagiza discovered that the man who had murdered her family was imprisoned nearby. Everyone expected hatred. But when she finally stood before him, she said words no one imagined possible: “I forgive you.” The man collapsed in tears. Mercy did not erase the past, but it broke the chain of death that hatred had forged. Forgiveness became the beginning of healing.

Marriage, too, is not built only on romance; it is sustained by mercy. Every couple will one day discover that love is not tested on the wedding day, but on ordinary days—when words fail, tempers rise, expectations disappoint, and weaknesses appear. St. Paul today tells us to “clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience... and over all these put on love.” In the Gospel, Jesus speaks of the shepherd who searches for the lost sheep. Real love searches, waits, forgives, and brings home again.

Today, as this couple stands before God, we are reminded that all of us need mercy: mercy from God and mercy toward one another. Before we celebrate this sacred covenant of love, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord to soften every hardened heart and heal every wounded relationship.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You seek the lost and carry the wounded with tenderness: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You teach us to forgive as we ourselves have been forgiven: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You bind together hearts in compassion, patience, and enduring love: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God,
who never ceases to search for His wandering children,
forgive our sins, heal our wounded hearts,
strengthen us in mercy and love, and bring us to everlasting life.
Amen.

COLLECT

Merciful and loving Father,
You revealed in Christ the tenderness that seeks the lost and rejoices over the sinner who returns.
As N. and N. begin their married life, clothe them with compassion, kindness, patience, and forgiving love,
that their home may become a place of healing,
peace, and faithful communion.
Teach them to carry one another's burdens with gentleness
and to reflect in their marriage
the mercy You continually show to 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 few years ago, after fifty-six years of marriage, an elderly husband was asked the secret of their lasting love. He smiled and replied, "Whenever my wife hurt me, I tried to remember one thing she had done for me that made me grateful. And whenever I hurt her, she remembered two." That is mercy. And mercy kept their marriage alive longer than romance ever could.

Today's Gospel is not simply about a lost sheep. It is about the heart of God. The shepherd does not say, "One sheep is gone; I still have ninety-nine." No. Love notices absence. Love searches. Love carries. Love restores.

And that is what marriage becomes.

There will be days in this marriage when one of you feels lost—not geographically, but emotionally. One may feel misunderstood, tired, disappointed, overwhelmed, or wounded. The temptation in modern relationships is simple: withdraw, keep score, protect pride, punish silence with silence. But Christian marriage follows another path: seek the lost sheep before the distance becomes permanent.

Mercy is not weakness. Mercy is strength under control. Anyone can walk away. It takes courage to stay, to listen, to apologize, to begin again.

A priest once visited a couple who had been married for over forty years. They seemed deeply peaceful together. He asked them, "Have you ever thought of divorce?" The wife answered immediately: "Divorce? Never. Murder sometimes—but never divorce." Everyone laughed, but beneath the humor was truth: every

lasting marriage survives because forgiveness appears again and again.

St. Paul today gives us the wardrobe of Christian marriage: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience. Notice that none of these are emotions. They are decisions. Feelings come and go, but mercy is a choice renewed daily.

And perhaps the deepest line in today's reading is this: "Bear with one another." Marriage means learning that the person you love most is also a person with weaknesses, fears, moods, scars, and limitations. Love becomes holy when it stops asking, "How perfect are you?" and begins asking, "How can I carry you?"

There is a story of a Japanese art called *Kintsugi*. When a bowl breaks, the cracks are repaired with gold. The cracks are not hidden; they become the most beautiful part of the bowl. That is how God works in marriage. The wounds forgiven, the tears healed, the reconciliations embraced—these become the golden lines of a strong marriage.

N. and N., never be afraid to say three sacred words: "I was wrong." And never become tired of saying another three: "I forgive you." A marriage without mercy becomes a courtroom. A marriage with mercy becomes a sanctuary.

And remember this: Jesus is not only present on your wedding day; He will also be present on the difficult days. When patience is exhausted, when misunderstandings grow, when disappointments wound deeply, Christ the Good Shepherd will continue searching for both of you, leading you back to each other again and again.

Let me end with this story.

During a terrible earthquake in Italy, rescuers found an elderly couple buried under rubble. The husband had shielded his wife with his own body for nearly two days. When rescuers finally reached them, the wife kept repeating through tears, "He never stopped holding my hand." In the darkest moment, love held on.

That is Christian marriage: not two perfect people holding a perfect life together, but two imperfect people refusing to let go because mercy keeps love alive. And when mercy remains, love never truly gets lost.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrating God's mercy revealed in Christ the Good Shepherd, let us now pray for this couple and for the needs of the Church and the world.

1. For the Church:

That the Church may always reflect the compassion of Christ, welcoming the lost, healing the wounded, and proclaiming reconciliation to the world, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For N. and N.:

That their marriage may always be marked by patience, tenderness, forgiveness, and enduring love, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

3. For married couples experiencing difficulties:

That wounded relationships may find healing through mercy, honest

dialogue, and renewed trust, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

4. For families and children:

That homes may become places of peace, understanding, and compassionate love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all gathered here and for our departed loved ones:

That God may gather us one day into the joy of His eternal kingdom where every tear is wiped away, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Merciful Father,

You rejoice whenever love is restored and hearts are reconciled.

Hear the prayers we place before You today

and strengthen us to walk always

in the path of compassion and peace.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, offered in gratitude for God's mercy and for the love of N. and N., may strengthen all married couples to live in compassion, forgiveness, and faithful communion, and may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

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

For in Your wisdom and love You created man and woman to live no longer for themselves alone

but for one another in faithful and fruitful love.

And when human weakness wounds relationships,

You do not abandon Your people,

but reveal in Christ the mercy that heals and restores.

In Him, the lost are sought, the broken are lifted up, and hearts divided by hurt are reconciled in peace.

Through the Sacrament of Marriage,

You call N. and N.

to reflect this divine compassion in their life together,

so that their home may become a living sign

of forgiveness, tenderness, and enduring hope.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,

we sing the hymn of Your glory, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,

let us pray with confidence to the Father

who continually forgives, heals,

and gathers His children into one family:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for N. and N.,
who come today to begin their married life at God's altar,
that through His mercy and blessing
they may grow in unity of heart and steadfast 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 the grace of Your Holy Spirit upon N. and N.,
that they may be patient in trials,
gentle in speech, ready to forgive,
and constant in mercy toward one another.

When misunderstandings arise,
teach them to seek reconciliation quickly.
When burdens grow heavy,
help them carry each other with compassion.
May their home be filled with peace, laughter, prayer, and welcome,
so that all who enter may encounter the warmth of Your presence.

Bless them with children,
that they may lovingly nurture them in faith and virtue,
and may their family become a sign of Your kingdom in the world.

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

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
You said to Your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you;
look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.
May every Christian home become a refuge of reconciliation, where
mercy triumphs over anger and love heals every wound.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
who seeks the lost, heals the broken-hearted,
and nourishes us with merciful love.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love lasts longest where mercy lives deepest.
Today Christ has fed us with the Bread of Life,
teaching us that forgiveness is not the end of love but its renewal.
May this couple always remember:
the strongest marriages are not those without wounds,
but those where grace continually heals them.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of Your mercy, we pray, O Lord, that N. and N. may be strengthened by this holy Sacrament to remain faithful in love, patient in suffering, and generous in forgiveness.

May their marriage reveal to the world the healing presence of Christ the Good Shepherd, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord Jesus, who sought the lost and reconciled sinners through mercy, fill your hearts with lasting peace.

May He strengthen N. and N. to walk together in patience, tenderness, and faithful love.

May your homes become places of forgiveness, joy, and healing for all who enter them.

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

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by lives marked with compassion, forgiveness, and enduring love.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A happy marriage is not the union of two perfect people, but the daily decision of two imperfect people to love each other mercifully.”

95. Living the Fruits of the Spirit in Marriage

Gal 5:22–25; Jn 15:4–5

Theme: “Remain in Christ, Bear the Fruits of Love.”

Marriage flourishes not by human strength alone, but by remaining rooted in Christ, who alone makes love fruitful, joyful, patient, faithful, and enduring.

INTRODUCTION

In a vineyard in northern Italy, an old vine keeper once showed visitors two branches lying side by side. One was freshly cut, green, and beautiful. The other was twisted, old, and still attached to the vine. “Which branch is more alive?” he asked. Everyone pointed to the green one. The old man smiled sadly and said, “Come back in a week.” When they returned, the green branch had dried into brittle wood, while the old branch, still united to the vine, carried tiny grapes beginning to grow. Beauty alone could not give life. Connection did.

Today, dear friends, we gather to witness not merely the joining of two hearts, but the planting of a marriage into Christ Himself. In the Gospel, Jesus says: “Remain in me as I remain in you.” The fruits Saint Paul speaks about — love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control — do not grow automatically. They grow only when two people remain connected to the true Vine even through changing seasons, disappointments, and sacrifices.

But there are times when we have disconnected ourselves from the Lord through pride, impatience, harsh words, selfishness, or lack of trust. Therefore, before we celebrate this sacred covenant, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord to prune whatever prevents us from bearing the beautiful fruits of His Spirit.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You are the true Vine who nourishes every faithful marriage with enduring love: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You call us to bear the fruits of patience, kindness, and peace in our relationships: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You remain faithful even when our love becomes weak and wounded: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us every moment when we failed to remain in His love,
when impatience replaced tenderness,
when selfishness overcame generosity,
and when fear weakened our trust;
may He prune from our hearts all that prevents the fruits of the Spirit
from growing within us, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

O God, who have called this bride and groom to remain in Your Son
as branches united to the true Vine,
grant that their marriage may daily bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit:
love in times of trial, joy in moments of blessing,
peace in times of tension,
and faithfulness through every season of life.
Teach them to draw their strength from Christ alone,
so that their home may become
a living sign of Your abiding 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

A wildfire swept through a forest in Yellowstone National Park years ago. After the fire was extinguished, a ranger walked through the ashes and found the burned body of a mother bird at the foot of a tree. She looked frozen in place. Gently, he pushed her aside with a stick — and from beneath her dead wings, three tiny chicks ran out alive. The mother had remained. She stayed through the fire so life could continue beneath her love.

That is marriage.

Not merely romance. Not merely attraction. Marriage is the decision to remain.

Jesus says today: “Remain in me.” Not visit me occasionally. Not remember me when life becomes difficult. Remain in me. Because disconnected love dries up. But connected love bears fruit.

Saint Paul gives us the fruits of the Spirit — and notice: they are not achievements; they are fruits. Fruit takes time. Fruit grows slowly. Fruit survives storms.

Love is a fruit.

Patience is a fruit.

Faithfulness is a fruit.

And fruit only grows when roots go deep.

A young husband once complained to an elderly priest, “Father, we fight all the time. I think we married the wrong person.” The old priest smiled and handed him a violin. “Play something beautiful.” The man

replied, “I don’t know how.” The priest said, “Exactly. Beautiful music does not come from owning a violin. It comes from practicing every day.” Marriage is like that. A wedding creates a union, but daily sacrifice creates harmony.

Dear bride and groom, there will be days when love feels effortless. There will also be days when it feels like work. Days when one of you will need more patience. Days when forgiveness will be harder than speaking. Days when silence may wound more deeply than anger.

And on those days, remember this:
the fruits of the Spirit are not produced by perfection but by remaining connected to Christ.

A vineyard owner once said that pruning looks cruel to someone who does not understand grapes. The vine is cut back not to destroy it, but to make it fruitful. God will sometimes prune your marriage too. Through disappointments. Through waiting. Through misunderstandings. Through struggles you never expected. But pruning in God’s hands is never punishment. It is preparation for deeper love.

One evening, after fifty-eight years of marriage, an old woman sat beside her husband in a nursing home. He no longer remembered her name because of Alzheimer’s disease. A nurse asked gently, “Why do you still visit every day if he doesn’t know who you are?” The woman smiled and touched her husband’s hand: “Because I still know who he is.”

That is the fruit of faithful love.

The world often treats love as a feeling that comes and goes. Christ speaks of love as a life that remains.

Today you are not simply promising to stay together while life is easy. You are promising to remain through fire, pruning, silence, weakness, aging, misunderstanding, and sacrifice — believing that Christ can still bear fruit through you.

And if you remain in Him, your home will slowly become a vineyard of grace where children learn kindness, where forgiveness becomes normal, where peace is protected, where joy survives hardship, and where others encounter the presence of God.

A man once carved these words onto his late wife’s gravestone: “We spent our lives growing grapes we would never fully taste.” That is Christian marriage. Much of your love will become blessings for others — for children, friends, strangers, and generations you may never meet.

Remain in Christ.

And your love will bear fruit long after your own hands have grown weak. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

United in Christ, the true Vine who gives life and fruitfulness to every Christian home, let us bring our prayers before the Father.

1. For the Church, that she may continue to nourish families with the grace of the Gospel and help married couples remain rooted in Christ, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

2. For this bride and groom, that their marriage may daily bear the fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, and faithfulness, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples who are struggling, wounded, or discouraged, that the Lord may heal, strengthen, and restore them through His mercy, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

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

5. For our departed loved ones and for all who planted seeds of faith and love in our lives, that they may share forever in the joy of God's kingdom, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of love and life,
You call us to remain in Your Son
so that we may bear lasting fruit.
Hear the prayers we offer today
and strengthen this newly married couple
with the grace of Your Spirit.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice,
together with the love and promises offered by this bride and groom,
may be rooted in Christ the true Vine
and bear fruits of faithfulness and peace throughout their lives,
and may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

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

For in Your wisdom You created man and woman in love
and called them to become one heart and one life.
In Christ Your Son, the true Vine,
You reveal that human love finds its strength
only when it remains united to Him.

Through the gift of the Holy Spirit
You make marriage fruitful with patience in suffering,
joy in blessing, peace in trials,
and faithfulness through every season of life.
You teach us that love grows not by human power alone,
but by abiding in Your 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 nourishes every branch united to Christ
and teaches every family to grow in love:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord for this bride and groom,
who today have come before the Church
so that God may strengthen them with His blessing
as they begin their life together in Christ.

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

Pour out the grace of the Holy Spirit upon this husband and wife.
Grant that they may remain always united to Christ, the true Vine,
so that their marriage may bear the fruits of love and joy,
peace and patience, kindness and faithfulness.

When trials come, strengthen them.
When misunderstandings arise, reconcile them.
When burdens grow heavy, sustain them with hope.
May they never cease to forgive one another
and may their home become a refuge of peace for all who enter it.

Bless them with children,
that they may lovingly welcome new life,
raise their sons and daughters in faith and virtue,
and witness together the joy of generations gathered in Your love.

And after a long and blessed life together,
bring them 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.

May this newly married couple remain deeply rooted in Your love,
bearing the fruits of patience, reconciliation,
and enduring peace within their home.
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, the true Vine, we receive the life that enables us
to bear lasting fruits of love and faithfulness.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love does not become fruitful in a single day.
Vines grow slowly. Fruit appears quietly.
But every act of forgiveness, every hidden sacrifice,
every patient word, every prayer said together
allows Christ to grow within a marriage.
Today this couple has been united before God.
Tomorrow the real vineyard begins.
May they remain in Christ always,
and may the fruits of the Spirit ripen beautifully within their home.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of Your Son, we ask You, Lord, to strengthen this bride and groom with the grace of this holy sacrament. May they remain always in Christ, the source of every good fruit, and may their marriage reveal to the world the beauty of faithful and enduring love. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May He make your love fruitful with the gifts of His Holy Spirit.
May He grant you patience in trials, joy in daily life, peace in your home, and faithfulness through all your years together.

May your family become a living witness that those who remain in Christ never remain without hope.

And may almighty God bless 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 fruits that will last.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“A fruitful marriage is not built on perfect people, but on two people who keep remaining in Christ.”

96. Hope-Filled Marriage in a Fragile World

Rom 8:24–28; Jn 16:33

Theme: “Hope is the Light that Love Refuses to Surrender.”
In a fragile and uncertain world, Christian marriage becomes a living proclamation that love anchored in Christ is stronger than fear, suffering, and instability. “In the world you will have trouble,” Jesus says, “but take courage, I have conquered the world.” A husband and wife do not marry because life is guaranteed to be easy, but because God is faithful enough to walk with them through every season.

INTRODUCTION

In 1940, during the bombings of London, a young couple was married in the middle of war. The church windows had been shattered days earlier. Sirens interrupted the liturgy. Some advised them to postpone the wedding until “better times.” But the groom answered quietly: “If we wait for a world without fear, we may never begin to live.” So they stood before the altar while the city trembled outside, and they exchanged vows as an act of hope against despair. Their marriage became a testimony that love is never born from perfect circumstances, but from courageous trust.

Today, dear friends, we gather in a world that is still fragile — a world of uncertainty, conflict, anxiety, and wounded hearts. Yet this couple stands before us proclaiming something beautiful: that hope is still possible. Saint Paul tells us in Romans that “all things work together for good for those who love God,” while Jesus assures us, “Take courage, I have overcome the world.” Christian marriage is not the denial of life’s storms; it is the decision to hold one another’s hand while Christ holds both.

But we also know that fear sometimes speaks louder than faith, impatience louder than tenderness, and disappointment louder than hope. Therefore, before we celebrate these sacred mysteries, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord to heal whatever keeps us from trusting fully in His victorious love.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You are the hope that shines in every darkness:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You remain faithful when human hearts grow weary and afraid: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You conquered the world through love stronger than suffering and death: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, who never abandons His people in times of trial, forgive us our sins, strengthen our weak hearts with hope, heal whatever fear divides us from Him and from one another, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

O God, who in your providence have called these your servants to the covenant of holy marriage, grant that amid the uncertainties and trials of this passing world they may place their hope firmly in Christ, who has conquered sin, suffering, and death. May their love become a sign of steadfast faith, their home a refuge of peace, and their lives a witness that your grace never fails. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son....., God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

HOMILY

A sailor once told the story of surviving a violent storm at sea. The waves were monstrous, the sky black, the boat nearly breaking apart. One young sailor panicked and shouted, "Are we going to die?" The old captain looked at him calmly and said, "Son, storms do not decide where we are going. The anchor does."

That is the difference between fear and hope.

Today, in a fragile world filled with uncertainty, this couple comes before God not because they are guaranteed calm seas, but because they have found an anchor. And that anchor is Christ.

Jesus does not deceive us in today's Gospel. He says plainly: "In the world you will have trouble." Not *you might*. Not *perhaps*. You *will*. Marriage too will have storms — misunderstandings, financial worries, disappointments, sickness, exhaustion, moments when love feels more difficult than romantic. But Jesus does not stop there. He continues: "Take courage; I have conquered the world."

Christian hope is not optimism. Optimism says, "Things will probably get better." Hope says, "Even if things become difficult, God will remain faithful."

There is an old Japanese art called *kintsugi*. When a bowl breaks, the cracks are repaired with gold. The fractures are not hidden; they become part of the beauty. In the same way, the strongest marriages are not those without wounds, but those where grace has entered the cracks.

One day this couple will discover something important: marriage is not sustained by grand gestures alone. It survives through ordinary acts of hope — choosing forgiveness after an argument, remaining faithful during difficult seasons, sitting beside one another in silence during grief, praying together when words fail.

A woman once cared for her husband through ten years of memory loss. Near the end, someone asked her, “Why do you still speak to him tenderly when he no longer remembers your name?” She answered, “Because I remember mine.” That is covenant love. Love that remains faithful not because circumstances are easy, but because the heart has made a promise before God.

Saint Paul says today: “We are saved in hope.” Hope means believing that God is still working even when we cannot yet see the outcome. And then Paul gives us one of the most misunderstood verses in Scripture: “All things work together for good for those who love God.” He does not say all things *are* good. Illness is not good. Betrayal is not good. Tears are not good. But God is powerful enough to bring goodness even from what tries to destroy us.

That is the mystery of the Cross.

And perhaps that is why weddings are so sacred. In a cynical world, every Christian marriage becomes a rebellion against despair. Every vow says: “Fear will not have the last word. God’s love will.”

Years from now, this couple may not remember every flower, every song, or every detail of this celebration. But they must remember this: the success of their marriage will not depend on living without storms, but on refusing to let go of hope when storms arrive.

Let me end with another story.

After a devastating earthquake, rescuers pulled a married couple from the ruins of their collapsed home. Covered in dust and blood, the husband was still holding his wife’s hand beneath the rubble. When asked later what kept them alive through the long night, the wife answered: “We could not see daylight, but we knew we were not alone.”

That is Christian marriage.

There will be nights when you cannot yet see daylight. But if Christ remains at the centre, you will never be alone. And that is why today is not merely a celebration of love. It is a proclamation of hope.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

With confidence in Christ who has conquered the world and remains the source of enduring hope, let us bring our prayers before the Father.

1. For the Church throughout the world, that amid uncertainty and suffering she may continue to proclaim hope, mercy, and the victory of Christ’s love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. For N. and N., that their marriage may become a shelter of peace, fidelity, and courage for one another and for all who enter their home, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
3. For married couples facing trials, illness, loneliness, or brokenness, that they may discover anew that God never abandons

them in their struggles, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For families burdened by fear about the future, economic hardship, or anxiety, that the Lord may strengthen them with hope and perseverance, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all gathered here, that our lives may become signs of hope in a wounded world and witnesses to the triumph of Christ's love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of mercy and hope, hear the prayers we place before you today. Strengthen us with the victory of 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 in hope and thanksgiving for the love of N. and N., and for God's faithfulness amid the fragility of human life, may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

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

For in your wisdom and love you created man and woman for one another, so that in a world marked by uncertainty and change they might become signs of steadfast hope and faithful love.

In Christ your Son,
you revealed that love is stronger than suffering,
that mercy is greater than sin,
and that hope does not disappoint those who trust in you.
Through the covenant of marriage
you unite the hearts of your servants today,
calling them to walk together through every joy and trial,
with Christ as their companion and strength.

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 sustains us with hope
and never abandons His children in times of trial.

NUPTIAL BLESSING

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

Holy Father, maker of the whole world,
who created man and woman in your own image
and willed that their union be crowned with your blessing,

look with kindness upon N. and N.
who today entrust their future to your loving providence.

May your peace dwell in their home,
your light guide them in moments of uncertainty,
and your strength uphold them in every trial.
Teach them never to surrender to fear,
but to remain steadfast in hope,
trusting that Christ has conquered the world.

Grant that they may console one another in sorrow,
rejoice together in blessings,
grow old in faithful companionship,
and become witnesses of hope to all around them.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may lovingly raise them in faith, wisdom, and compassion,
and may their family become a living sign of your kingdom.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your
will.
In a world wounded by fear and uncertainty, make our homes places
of hope, reconciliation, and steadfast love.
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, hope is renewed, fear is overcome,
and love finds strength to endure.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Hope is not born because life is easy.
Hope is born because Christ remains present.
Today this couple has received not only one another,
but also the Lord who promises
to walk with them through every season of life.
The Eucharist they shared today
will become their hidden strength tomorrow —
in joy and in sorrow, in clarity and in confusion,
in abundance and in struggle.
The world may remain fragile,
but hearts anchored in Christ need not be afraid.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at your table, O Lord,
we ask that these sacred mysteries
strengthen N. and N. in faith, hope, and enduring love.
May the Body and Blood of Christ
sustain them through every joy and trial,
and make their marriage a living witness
that your grace is stronger than fear
and your love stronger than every darkness.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May He strengthen your hearts with hope when life becomes difficult.
May He grant you the grace always to choose love over fear,
forgiveness over resentment, and faith over despair.
And may almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your lives.
And may your marriage become a light of hope in a fragile world.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Storms do not decide where love is going; the anchor does.
And the anchor of Christian marriage is Christ.”

97. Becoming Saints Together

Hebrews 12:1–2; Matthew 5:13–16

Theme: “Becoming Saints Together: A Marriage that Becomes Light for the World”

INTRODUCTION

In the city of Assisi, tourists often stop before the small chapel where Saint Francis prayed. Near it is a simple lamp that burns day and night. Years ago, a guide was asked, “Why does this tiny flame never go out?” The old man smiled and replied, “Because someone always returns to refill the oil.” Holiness is like that. No marriage remains bright automatically. Love survives because, day after day, someone returns to refill the lamp — with forgiveness, prayer, sacrifice, tenderness, and faith.

Today, dear friends, N. and N. stand before God not merely to celebrate a romantic moment but to begin a sacred journey toward sainthood together. The Letter to the Hebrews urges us to “run with perseverance the race set before us, keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus.” And in the Gospel, Jesus tells them: “You are the salt of the earth... you are the light of the world.” Marriage is not only about living together; it is about helping one another reach heaven.

Yet there are moments when our lamps grow dim — when selfishness replaces sacrifice, when pride weakens love, when faith becomes secondary. And so, before celebrating these sacred mysteries, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord to rekindle in us the light of holiness.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You call husbands and wives to become saints through faithful love: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You make Christian families a light shining in the darkness of the world: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You give us the grace to persevere in love when the journey becomes difficult: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God, whose love never ceases to refill the lamps of His children with mercy and grace, forgive us our sins, strengthen us in holiness, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

COLLECT

O God, who have called your children not only to love one another but also to walk together on the path of holiness, grant that N. and N., strengthened by your grace, may keep their eyes fixed on Christ, become light for one another and for the world, and persevere faithfully in charity 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 few years ago, firefighters entered a burning house after midnight. Inside they found an elderly couple sitting calmly beside one another. The fireman shouted, “Why didn’t you run?” The old man quietly answered, “She cannot walk... and I promised 54 years ago that I would never leave her.” That is holiness. Not halos in stained glass, but love that stays when it would be easier to leave.

Dear N. and N., today the Church is not merely blessing your happiness. She is blessing your path to sainthood.

The world often speaks about marriage as a contract built on feelings. But feelings rise and fall like waves. The Gospel today speaks of something deeper: “You are the light of the world.” Light does not exist for itself. A lamp burns so others may see. Christian marriage is meant to shine — not through perfection, but through faithful love.

Hebrews speaks about “running the race with perseverance.” Marriage is exactly that: a long race, not a short sprint. The saints became saints not because life was easy but because they kept walking toward God despite weakness and suffering.

There is a story about a sculptor who was once asked how he created a magnificent statue of a lion from a rough block of marble. He replied, “I simply removed everything that did not belong to the lion.” Marriage does that too. Over the years, God slowly chisels away selfishness, impatience, pride, and ego so that love becomes pure and holy.

N. and N., there will be ordinary days ahead: bills to pay, moments of exhaustion, misunderstandings, perhaps tears no one else will ever see. Holiness is built there — in ordinary hidden faithfulness. A saint is often simply a person who kept loving when it was difficult.

Saint Monica prayed for her husband and son for years through disappointment and heartbreak. Saint Louis and Saint Zélie Martin built holiness amid work, sickness, and raising children. They were not extraordinary because life was easy; they were extraordinary because they allowed Christ to remain at the centre.

And Jesus says today: “Salt of the earth.” Salt disappears into food so others may taste goodness. Real love also disappears quietly into sacrifice. Sometimes holiness in marriage means saying, “I’m sorry” first. Sometimes it means listening when tired, forgiving when hurt, remaining faithful when misunderstood.

There is another story of a traveller who visited a monastery and asked an old monk, “What do you do here every day?” The monk answered, “We fall and get up. Fall and get up. Fall and get up again. Until one day, by the grace of God, we become holy.” That is marriage too. Not perfection, but beginning again — together.

N. and N., one day your beauty will change, your strength will weaken, and your hair will turn gray. But if you keep Christ at the center, your love will become radiant in a deeper way. The greatest compliment people should one day say about your marriage is not “They were successful,” but “Being near them made us believe in God.”

And remember this: heaven is not the place where your marriage ends. Heaven is where faithful love finally becomes complete.

A nurse once spoke about the final moments of an old married man dying in hospice care. His wife held his hand and whispered, “We are almost home.” Those words contain the secret of Christian marriage. Marriage is two people walking each other home to God.

May your love become exactly that — a light in the darkness, a lamp constantly refilled by grace, until together you stand before Christ among the saints.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Trusting in God, who calls every Christian family to become a light for the world, let us bring before Him our prayers for this couple and for the whole Church.

1. For N. and N., that their marriage may grow daily in holiness, patience, forgiveness, and joy, and that they may always keep their eyes fixed on Christ, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. For married couples everywhere, especially those struggling with burdens, disappointments, or loneliness, that God may renew their strength and rekindle the light of love within them, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
3. For the Church, that she may continue to shine as a beacon of hope in a wounded world and courageously witness to faithful and holy love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For future children who may bless this marriage, that they may grow in wisdom, faith, and compassion within a home filled with prayer and love, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For our departed loved ones and for all married couples who have gone before us marked with faith, that they may rejoice forever among the communion of saints, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, hear our prayer.

Father of love and holiness, hear the prayers we place before You today. Strengthen N. and N. in their vocation of marriage, and make their lives a radiant witness to Your presence in the world. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice, offered for N. and N. as they begin their journey toward holiness together, 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 to walk together not only in human companionship but in the path of holiness. In Christian marriage you reveal the mystery of Christ's faithful love for His Church, and you make the home a lamp shining before the world.

You teach us that holiness is formed through daily acts of patience, forgiveness, sacrifice, and joy, and you strengthen married couples to persevere in love with their eyes fixed on Christ.

And so, with the Angels and Saints, and with all who have run the race of faith before us, we praise you, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching, let us pray with confidence to the Father who calls us to walk together toward holiness:

NUPTIAL BLESSING

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

Holy Father, creator of the human family and source of every perfect love, pour out the grace of your blessing upon N. and N.

Grant that they may keep their eyes always fixed on Christ, support one another in times of joy and trial, and become for each other a path toward holiness.

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

May they be salt for the earth and light for the world,
offering encouragement to the weary and hope to those in darkness.

Bless them with children,
that they may lovingly nurture them in faith and virtue,
and together form a family radiant with your presence.

When trials come, strengthen them;
when success comes, keep them humble;
when they grow weary, renew their love through your grace.

And after a long and faithful 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.
May the peace shared today by N. and N.
strengthen them to become a light for others
and a refuge for one another in every storm 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.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle.
In the same way, holy love never diminishes by giving itself away.
Today Christ has nourished N. and N. with His own life
so that their marriage may become a quiet light in the world —
a love that forgives, perseveres,
and leads one another gently toward heaven.
May they always remember: saints are not people who never fail,
but people who never stop returning to the grace of God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of your heavenly banquet,
we pray, O Lord,
that N. and N., strengthened by the Body and Blood of Christ,
may persevere faithfully in love,
shine before the world as witnesses of holiness and peace,
and one day rejoice together among your Saints.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord Jesus,
who called you to be the light of the world,
fill your marriage with enduring faith, steadfast hope, and selfless
love.

Amen.

May He strengthen you in every trial,
renew your joy in every season of life,
and lead you together on the path of holiness.

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 your love
shine before the world as a witness that leads others toward God.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

A holy marriage is not two perfect people living together;
it is two imperfect people helping each other get to heaven.

98. The Witness of Elderly Married Couples

Sirach 3:1–6; Lk 1:5–25

Theme: “A Love That Becomes a Witness Across Time”

INTRODUCTION

In a small village in Italy, an elderly couple celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary. A journalist asked the husband, “What is the secret of such a long marriage?” The old man smiled and said, “We were born in a time when broken things were repaired, not thrown away.” His wife looked at him and quietly added, “And every repair left us stronger.”

Today’s readings honour that kind of love — a love tested by time, disappointment, waiting, sacrifice, forgiveness, and fidelity. Zechariah and Elizabeth carried the pain of unanswered prayers, yet they remained faithful before God. Their marriage itself became a testimony.

A wedding day often shines with youth, beauty, flowers, and celebration. But the Church also invites us today to look far beyond this moment — toward the day when this couple may walk slowly together with grey hair, wrinkled hands, and tired bodies, yet with hearts still faithful. The greatest beauty of marriage is not found in the wedding album, but in the perseverance of love through decades.

As we begin this sacred celebration, we also recognize how easily human love can grow impatient, wounded, selfish, or fearful. Like Zechariah, we sometimes struggle to trust God’s timing. Therefore, with humble hearts, let us ask the Lord for mercy and healing.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You call husbands and wives to remain faithful through every season of life: **Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, You strengthen weary hearts and renew hope when love is tested by waiting and suffering: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You make Christian families living witnesses of patience, tenderness, and enduring faith: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God,
who patiently guides His children through every season of life,
forgive us our doubts, heal our weaknesses, strengthen our love,
and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God,
who revealed in the faithful lives of Zechariah and Elizabeth
the beauty of steadfast love and enduring trust,
look kindly upon your servants
who come today to enter the covenant of Holy Matrimony.
Grant that their love may deepen through joy and sorrow,
grow stronger through every trial,
and become a living witness of your enduring 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 young boy once asked his grandfather, “Grandpa, how did you know Grandma was the one?”

The old man laughed softly and replied, “Because after fifty years, she still knew how to calm my storms.”

Then he paused and added, “And I still wanted to hold her hand after every storm had passed.”

That is the kind of love the Church celebrates today — not merely romantic love, but enduring love. Not love that survives only sunny days, but love that remains standing after many winters.

In today’s Gospel, we meet Zechariah and Elizabeth. Scripture describes them in a beautiful way: “*They were righteous before God.*” Notice — before God. Their marriage was not built merely on feelings, attraction, or convenience. It was rooted in God. Yet despite their holiness, they carried silent pain: they had no child. In their culture, that sorrow carried shame, questions, and disappointment.

Still, they remained faithful.

Some marriages collapse not because love disappears overnight, but because disappointment slowly erodes hope. A prayer unanswered. A dream delayed. A wound unspoken. Yet Zechariah and Elizabeth teach us that a holy marriage is not a marriage without pain — it is a marriage that continues to trust God inside the pain.

There is a Japanese art called *Kintsugi*. When a bowl breaks, the cracks are repaired with gold. The repaired bowl becomes more beautiful because of the places that were broken. Long marriages

are like that. They carry cracks filled with forgiveness, scars healed by patience, and wounds transformed by grace.

Dear couple, one day your love will be tested. There will be days when words fail, when fatigue wins, when misunderstandings hurt deeply. There may be moments of waiting — waiting for healing, for reconciliation, for children, for financial stability, for peace. In those moments, remember Zechariah and Elizabeth. God is still working even in silent years.

The elderly married couples of our world are among the greatest but most unnoticed saints of the Church. Think of the old husband feeding his wife who no longer remembers his name because of dementia. Think of the wife who still sits beside her sick husband every evening in the hospital. Think of couples who buried dreams, endured losses, raised children through sacrifice, and still remained faithful. Their wrinkles are sermons. Their patience is prophecy. Their quiet fidelity is holiness.

A priest once visited an elderly couple celebrating sixty years of marriage. He asked the wife, “Have you ever considered divorce?” She answered immediately, “Divorce? Never. Murder... maybe. But never divorce.” Everyone laughed. But beneath the humour was a profound truth: lasting marriages are not perfect marriages; they are persevering marriages.

The world often glorifies what is new, fast, and exciting. But God treasures what endures. A candle that burns for one hour impresses the eye; a lamp that keeps burning through the entire night saves the household.

Today, your wedding is not simply about beginning a life together. It is about becoming a witness. Years from now, younger couples may look at your fidelity and find courage. Your future grandchildren may discover God because they first saw faithfulness in you. Your home can become a living Gospel.

And perhaps that is why the most moving moment in many marriages comes not on the wedding day, but decades later — when two elderly hands still reach for each other at Mass, slowly walking together toward Communion. At that moment, love has become more than emotion. It has become covenant. It has become sacrifice. It has become holy.

A nurse once spoke about an elderly man who came daily to visit his wife in a nursing home. She no longer recognized him because of Alzheimer’s disease. One day the nurse asked, “Why do you still come every morning if she doesn’t know who you are?” The old man smiled gently and replied, “Because I still know who she is.”

That is covenant love.

That is faithful love.

That is the kind of love God has for us.

And that is the love to which you are called today.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Gathered as God's family and inspired by the witness of faithful marriages that endure through time, let us bring our prayers before the Lord.

1. For the Church, that she may continue to support and strengthen married couples in fidelity, patience, and holiness, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. For this newly married couple, that their love may mature through every season of life and become a witness of God's enduring presence, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
3. For elderly married couples, especially those carrying illness, loneliness, or hardship, that their faithful witness may be honoured and blessed, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
4. For couples struggling in their marriages, that God may heal wounds, renew hope, and strengthen reconciliation, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**
5. For future generations and for the children this couple may one day receive, that their home may become a place of faith, tenderness, and peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our...**

Heavenly Father,
You remain faithful through every generation.
Hear the prayers we place before You today,
and make every Christian family a living sign of Your enduring 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 faithful love
and entrusted to God who sustains every marriage
through time and 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 in fidelity and mutual care,
so that through the covenant of marriage
they might become witnesses of your enduring love in the world.

In Zechariah and Elizabeth
you revealed that holiness is often formed
through waiting, perseverance, and trust.
And today you bless this couple
that their home may become a place of prayer,
mercy, patience, and hope.

Through years of joy and sorrow, through strength and weakness,
you remain the faithful companion of those who trust in you.
And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions,
and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven,
we sing the hymn of your glory, as without end we acclaim:

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

At the Savior's command and formed by divine teaching,
let us pray to the Father who sustains every family
with faithful and enduring love.

NUPTIAL BLESSING

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

Holy Father, creator of all things,
you made man and woman in your image
and blessed their union with love and fidelity.
Pour out the grace of your Holy Spirit upon these your servants.

Grant that they may remain faithful companions through every
season of life; that in joy they may be grateful, in sorrow steadfast,
in conflict forgiving,
and in old age still joyful in one another's presence.

May their home become a refuge of peace, a school of faith,
and a living witness of Christian love.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may lovingly welcome them, wisely guide them,
and rejoice to see their children walk in your ways.

May they support one another with patience and tenderness,
grow old together in dignity and trust,
and one day 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 newly married couple become instruments of reconciliation,
patience, and enduring peace
within their family and among all they meet.
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 becomes holy not in one extraordinary moment,
but in thousands of ordinary acts repeated faithfully over time.
A hand held in sickness, forgiveness offered after failure,
prayers whispered together at night,
quiet sacrifices unnoticed by the world —
these become the true architecture of a Christian marriage.
Today Christ has nourished this couple with His own life
so that their love may endure, deepen,
and become a witness for generations to come.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of your Son, we pray, O Lord, that this couple, strengthened by the Bread of Life, may remain faithful in love, constant in hope, and joyful in mutual service throughout their years together. May their marriage become a light to others and a lasting witness of your presence in the world. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you faithful through every season of life. **Amen.**

May He strengthen your love in times of joy and trial, and fill your home with peace. **Amen.**

May your marriage become a witness of enduring faithfulness for your children, your families, and the world. **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 the faithfulness of your love.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“The beauty of marriage is not measured by how perfectly love begins, but by how faithfully it endures.”

99. Marriage as a Light to the World

Is 60:1–5; Mt 5:14–16

Theme: “A Marriage That Gives Light”

Christian marriage is not meant to hide behind closed doors; it is called to shine. Like the light spoken of by Isaiah and by Jesus in the Gospel, the love of this couple is invited to become a beacon of hope, faithfulness, forgiveness, and joy for a world often darkened by loneliness and division.

INTRODUCTION

In 1994, during a prolonged power outage in a small coastal town, an elderly couple placed a single candle in their window every night. Neighbours later said that whenever they saw that small flame flickering in the darkness, they felt less afraid. One man admitted, “I never spoke to them much, but their light told me that hope was still alive.” Years later, after the husband died, people remembered not the size of their house or their possessions, but the quiet light that came from their window.

Today, dear friends, we gather because God intends Christian marriage to be like that candle in the window. Isaiah cries out: “Arise, shine, for your light has come.” And Jesus tells us: “You are the light of the world.” Marriage is not only about two people finding happiness together; it is about two hearts becoming a light through which others can glimpse the goodness of God.

But every light needs fuel. Too often pride, impatience, selfishness, and woundedness dim the brightness God desires for us. Therefore, before we celebrate these sacred mysteries, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord to rekindle His light within us.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus, You are the light that shines in every darkness:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, You call husbands and wives to reflect Your faithful love: **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, You never cease to brighten hearts burdened by sin and fear: **Lord, have mercy.**

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God,
who calls us out of darkness into His marvellous light,
forgive the sins that have dimmed our hearts,
heal every wound of selfishness and division,
strengthen us in faithful love, and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.

COLLECT

O God, source of every true light and lasting love,
You have called N. and N. to shine before the world
through the covenant of Christian marriage.
Grant that their home may radiate faith,
their words may bring hope,
and their love may reveal Your presence to all who meet them.
Teach them to remain steadfast in trials,
humble in blessings,
and generous in mercy,
so that their married life
may become a living witness to the Gospel. 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

“The World Does Not Need Perfect Couples — It Needs Shining Couples.”

Many years ago, a teacher asked her students to write the names of the happiest people they knew. One little boy wrote only one sentence: “My grandparents — because they still hold hands when they pray.”

That was all. No mention of wealth, success, or achievements. Just two old hands still reaching for each other after decades.

That is light.

And that is what Jesus speaks about today.

“My dear couple, today the Lord is not merely blessing your feelings for one another. He is entrusting you with a mission: *to become light.*”

Isaiah says, “Arise, shine, for your light has come.” Notice: he does not say, “Arise when life becomes easy.” He says, “Arise” even in darkness. The beauty of Christian marriage is not that it never suffers; it is that love continues to shine despite suffering.

The world today has many bright screens but very few bright hearts. People are connected digitally, yet deeply lonely. Many have stopped believing that faithful love can last. And that is why your marriage matters. Without preaching a single sermon, your patience with each other, your forgiveness after arguments, your tenderness in difficult days, your faithfulness in ordinary routines — all these will preach louder than words.

There is a story of a lighthouse keeper who lived on a dangerous coastline. One stormy night, he noticed another ship approaching the rocks. He quickly lit the great lamp, and the ship was saved. Later someone asked him, “Were you not afraid the storm would extinguish the light?”

He replied, “My task was not to control the storm. My task was simply to keep the lamp burning.”

That is marriage. You cannot control every storm. There will be misunderstandings, financial worries, disappointments, perhaps tears that nobody else sees. But your vocation is to keep the lamp burning.

Jesus says something extraordinary today: “A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.” In other words, married love always influences others. Children learn love by watching their parents. Friends rediscover hope by seeing faithful couples. Even strangers are strengthened by homes filled with kindness.

A nurse once spoke about visiting an elderly dying man in a hospital. Every evening his wife came quietly, combed his hair, wiped his face, and prayed beside him. One young nurse later said, “Until I met them, I did not believe lifelong love existed.”

Imagine that: even near death, their marriage was still giving light.

Dear couple, one day wrinkles will come. Strength will fade. External beauty will change. But if you keep Christ at the centre, something deeper will happen: your love will become luminous. The holiest marriages are not those without wounds, but those where Christ shines through the wounds.

And remember this too: light is not noisy. A candle never shouts. It simply burns. Your marriage will evangelize most powerfully not through grand gestures, but through daily fidelity — listening when tired, apologizing when proud, praying when confused, staying when leaving would be easier.

At the end of life, people rarely ask, “How successful was my marriage?” They ask, “Did we love well? Did our love make life brighter for others?”

Today, before this altar, God is lighting a flame. Protect it in difficult days. Feed it with prayer. Rekindle it with forgiveness. Share it generously with the world.

And perhaps many years from now, someone will look at your marriage and quietly say:

“Because of them, I believed again that God is real.”

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrating God’s gift of love and asking Him to make this marriage a light for the world, let us now bring our prayers before the Father.

1. For the Church: that she may continue to shine with the light of Christ in a world searching for hope and truth, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For N. and N.: that their marriage may radiate patience, fidelity, forgiveness, and joy, becoming a beacon for all who know them, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples everywhere: especially those carrying heavy burdens, that God may strengthen their love and renew their courage, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. For families and children: that homes may become places of prayer, tenderness, and peace where Christ's light is never extinguished, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For the lonely, the grieving, and those who have lost hope in love: that through the witness of faithful marriages they may discover again the goodness of God, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Father of light and love,
hear the prayers we place before You today.
May this marriage become a living reflection
of Your enduring presence in the world.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters, that this sacrifice,
offered in thanksgiving for the light of love God
has kindled in this couple's hearts,
may strengthen them to shine with Christ's faithful love
throughout their lives,
and may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

PREFACE

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

For in Your wisdom and love
You created man and woman
to walk together in faithful communion,
so that their union might reflect
the radiance of Your own divine love.

In Christ Your Son,
You have called Christian spouses
not only to share life together
but also to become light for the world:
a sign of hope in times of darkness,
a witness of fidelity in an age of uncertainty,
and a living reminder
that love is strongest when rooted in You.

Today You bless N. and N.,
uniting them in the covenant of marriage,
that their home may shine with prayer,
their hearts remain steadfast in mercy,
and their lives reveal the joy of the Gospel.

And so, with Angels and Archangels, and with all the saints,
we proclaim Your glory, as without end we acclaim:
Holy, Holy, Holy Lord...

INVITATION TO THE OUR FATHER

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

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters, let us humbly pray to the Lord
for these newly married spouses,
that He who has brought them together today
may keep them united in faithful love.

Holy Father, maker of light and source of all love,
look with kindness upon N. and N.,
who today begin their married life before Your altar.

Pour upon them the grace of Your Holy Spirit,
that they may keep the flame of love alive
through every season of life.

May they be patient in suffering, grateful in joy,
quick to forgive, and constant in prayer.

Let their home be a place of welcome and peace,
where the lonely are comforted, where faith is cherished,
and where Your name is honoured.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may lovingly raise them in wisdom and faith,
and may their family become a radiant sign
of Your goodness in the world.

And after a lifetime of faithful love,
bring them with all whom they love
into the eternal light of Your heavenly kingdom.

Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR PEACE

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

May the peace You give also fill the home of N. and N.,
that their marriage may become a light of reconciliation,
tenderness, and hope 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.

Through this holy banquet,
Christ strengthens us to become light for one another
and for the world.

Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

A lamp shines not by a single spark,
but by remaining connected to its source of fire.
Today Christ has nourished this couple with His own life.
If they remain close to Him,
their love will continue to glow even through difficult nights.
May their marriage become a quiet light
that helps others find their way back to God.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at the table of Your Son, we ask You, Lord, to strengthen N. and N. in the grace of this holy sacrament. May the love they have celebrated today grow ever deeper through prayer, sacrifice, and fidelity, so that their marriage may shine brightly before the world and lead others toward Your peace and truth. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May He make His face shine upon you
and fill your home with peace.
May He strengthen you in times of trial,
deepen your joy in times of blessing,
and keep the light of your love burning brightly all your days.
May your marriage become a refuge for the weary,
a school of forgiveness for your children,
and a witness of hope for the world.

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

DISMISSAL

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

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“The greatest marriages are not those without darkness, but those that keep choosing to shine.”

100. “Love Never Fails” — The Eternal Meaning of Christian Marriage - 1 Cor 13:1–13; Jn 17:20–26

THEME: “Love That Outlives Time”

Christian marriage is not founded merely on emotion, attraction, or compatibility, but on the eternal love of God revealed in Christ. Human achievements fade, beauty changes, and emotions fluctuate, but true love — patient, forgiving, faithful, and self-giving — never fails because it participates in the very life of God. In marriage, husband and wife become a living sign that divine love is stronger than time, suffering, distance, weakness, and even death.

INTRODUCTION

A married couple celebrating their sixtieth wedding anniversary was once asked, “What is the secret of your lasting marriage?” The old woman smiled and answered, “We were born in a time when, if something broke, we repaired it — we did not throw it away.” In a world where relationships are often discarded at the first wound or disappointment, Christian marriage becomes a courageous decision to repair, forgive, rebuild, and love again. That is why Saint Paul says today: “Love never fails.”

Jesus, in the Gospel, prays not for success, wealth, or comfort for his disciples, but for unity — “that they may be one.” Real love is not proven in perfect moments, but in imperfect days when two people continue choosing one another. Christian marriage is not merely about staying together; it is about growing together into the love of Christ.

As we gather around this altar, we also recognize how often human love falls short — through impatience, selfishness, wounded words, and failures to forgive. Therefore, with humble hearts, let us ask the Lord for mercy and healing.

PENITENTIAL ACT WITH KYRIE INVOCATIONS

Lord Jesus,
you loved us with a patient and faithful love:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus,
you prayed that we may live in unity and peace:
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus,
you remain faithful even when we are weak:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

May almighty God,
who teaches us that love is patient, kind, and enduring,
forgive us our sins, heal what is broken within us,
strengthen us in fidelity and compassion,
and bring us to everlasting life.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God,
who revealed in Christ
the love that never fails
and who consecrate the covenant of marriage
as a sign of your eternal communion,
pour out your grace upon this couple,
that in joy and trial, in strength and weakness,
they may remain faithful in love,
growing always in unity, 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 young boy once asked his grandfather, “Grandpa, how did you stay married to Grandma for over fifty years?” The old man looked quietly at his wife sitting across the room and replied, “Every morning I woke up and chose to love her again.”

That is the heart of Christian marriage. Love is not merely a feeling you fall into; it is a decision you rise into every day.

Saint Paul today gives us one of the most beautiful descriptions ever written about love. But notice something important: Paul is not describing romance; he is describing sacrifice. “Love is patient... love is kind... it bears all things, believes all things, endures all things.” These words sound beautiful in poetry, but they become holy

only when lived in ordinary life — during misunderstandings, exhaustion, sickness, financial stress, disappointments, and silent tears.

Real love is tested not at weddings but on ordinary Tuesdays.

There is an old story about a violinist performing on stage when suddenly one string snapped. The audience gasped. Then another string broke. Yet the musician continued playing beautifully with the remaining strings. After the concert, someone asked him how he managed. He answered, “The music was never in the strings; it was in me.”

Marriage will sometimes lose strings — health, certainty, youthful beauty, dreams, comfort, even moments of harmony. But if the music of love truly lives within the soul, the marriage can still sing.

In the Gospel, Jesus prays: “Father, may they be one.” Unity is not uniformity. Two people remain different personalities, different histories, different temperaments. Yet love creates communion stronger than differences. Unity is not the absence of conflict; it is the refusal to let conflict have the final word.

A husband once said after many years of marriage, “We have had many arguments, but we never had an exit plan.” That is Christian love. The world often asks, “How long will love last?” Christ asks instead, “How deeply can you love?”

And Saint Paul gives the answer: deeply enough to forgive again, to listen again, to trust again, and to begin again.

There is another story of an elderly woman caring daily for her husband who no longer recognized her because of dementia. Someone asked her, “Why do you still visit him every day if he no longer knows who you are?” She answered softly, “Because I still know who he is.”

That is love that never fails. Love is not sustained by perfect memory, perfect emotions, or perfect circumstances. It is sustained by fidelity.

Dear bride and groom, today you are not simply promising to stay together while life is easy. You are promising to become living witnesses that God’s love is stronger than weakness, disappointment, suffering, and time itself. Your marriage is meant to preach a sermon long after words are forgotten.

And one day, many years from now, people may not remember the flowers, the music, or even this beautiful celebration. But they will remember whether your love made others believe that God is real.

A sailor once said that during storms, lighthouses become more important than during calm seas. Anyone can love when life is easy. But faithful love during darkness becomes light for the world.

That is why Saint Paul ends with these words: “Faith, hope, and love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

Because in heaven, faith will become sight, hope will be fulfilled — but love will remain forever.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Celebrating the love that never fails, let us now bring our prayers before God, whose love sustains every covenant and whose mercy renews every human heart.

1. For the Church throughout the world, that she may be a faithful witness to God's enduring love and unity, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

2. For this newly married couple, that their home may become a place of forgiveness, joy, tenderness, and unwavering fidelity, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

3. For married couples who struggle through difficulties, illness, loneliness, or disappointment, that they may find healing, strength, and renewed hope in Christ, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

4. For families divided by conflict or wounded relationships, that the grace of reconciliation may restore peace and unity, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, hear our prayer.**

5. For all gathered here today, that our lives may reflect the patient and enduring love described by Saint Paul, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Father of eternal love,
you teach us that true love never fails.
Hear the prayers we place before you today
and strengthen us to live in faithfulness and peace.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Pray, brothers and sisters,
that this sacrifice, offered in thanksgiving
for the covenant of love begun today,
and for the grace to remain faithful through all the seasons 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 you created man and woman in love
and called them to become one heart and one life.
In the covenant of Christian marriage
you reveal the mystery of your faithful love,
a love that endures through joy and sorrow,
through abundance and hardship,
through all the changing seasons of life.

In Christ your Son,
you have shown us the love that never fails,
the love that forgives, heals, and remains faithful forever.
And today you bless this couple,
that their union may become a living sign
of your presence in the world
and a light of hope for all who witness their 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 Savior's command
and formed by divine teaching,
we dare to say the prayer
that unites God's children as one family,
trusting in the Father whose love never fails.

NUPTIAL BLESSING

Dear brothers and sisters,
let us humbly pray to the Lord
for this bride and groom,
who now begin their married life in Christ.

Holy Father,
creator of love and source of all unity,
pour out the grace of your blessing upon these newlyweds.
May their love remain patient in trials,
faithful in difficulties,
joyful in blessings,
and constant in tenderness.

Teach them to repair what is wounded,
to forgive without counting the cost,
and to choose one another again each day of their lives.
May their home become a refuge of peace,
a school of compassion,
and a living witness that love never fails.

Bless them with the gift of children,
that they may lovingly welcome new life,

raise their family in faith and wisdom,
and hand on to future generations
the light of your enduring love.

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 this couple always find peace not in the absence of struggle,
but in the strength of love that forgives and begins anew.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who reveals the love that never fails.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

SHORT MEDITATION AFTER COMMUNION

Love becomes believable when it remains faithful through time.
Today Christ has nourished us with the Bread of Life,
the sacrament of the love that never abandons us.
May this couple always remember
that the deepest strength of marriage
is not perfection, but perseverance in love.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Having shared at your table, O Lord,
in the sacrament of perfect love,
we pray that this couple,
strengthened by the Body and Blood of Christ,
may remain steadfast in unity,
patient in suffering,
generous in forgiveness,
and joyful in hope.

May their lives become a witness
that love grounded in you truly never fails.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

FINAL BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May he strengthen your hearts in faithful love,
fill your home with peace and joy,
and make your marriage a light for all who know you.

May he grant you patience in trials,
courage in difficult days,
gratitude in moments of blessing,
and enduring unity through every season of 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 your lives,
and by a love that never fails.
Thanks be to God.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

“Marriage is not sustained by finding the perfect person,
but by learning to love imperfectly with perfect fidelity.”