



Catholic
Charities
North Dakota
Fall 2009

Faith + Works Wonders

I take thee to be my lawfully wedded...

When Rosemary was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, John said "She took care of me for 50 years, I'll take care of her for the next 50." Although Rosemary died days before their 61st anniversary, family and friends witnessed the strength of a union rooted in the teachings of the Catholic Church on marriage.

Marriage is a call to holiness. Being married helps each person develop as a whole person in the image of Christ. A couple moves from being two "I's" to becoming an "Us" who give life to the world. The care for one another takes place in ordinary and daily ways, from the chores that need to be done to maintain a family and home, to the sacrifice called forth when illness, or other challenges enter into a couple's life.

For married couples, marriage is their most important life's work. An investment of time and treasure in their marriage is also an investment in their own health, finances and spiritual welfare. A married couple is wise to take part in marriage enrichment activities, seek out marriage building resources, and friends who support them in their call to grow into wholeness and holiness.

Marriage is a Covenant, a solemn promise to one's spouse and to God. On their wedding day, couples do not know what the future will bring but they have the assurance that God is always with them.



In decades past, young women would fill a hope chest with items needed to start out married life-embroidered towels, bed and table linens, treasures from family members. In much the same way, when a couple consent to their wedding vows, God fills a treasure chest for them. In that chest are the graces and blessings needed to face whatever challenges and difficulties that would pull the couple apart, as well as those graces that help them celebrate their joys, dreams, successes and continue to deepen their commitment to one another.

Going to God together, in prayer, is a way to open the treasure chest and embrace the graces available to meet all a couple's needs.

Marriage is a Sacrament. In Catholic teaching, the valid marriage between two baptized Christians is a sacrament, making Christ present in our midst. The love between the spouses symbolizes Christ's love for the church.

Like the other sacraments, marriage is not just for the good of individuals, or the couple, but for the community as a whole. A married couple gives witness to all around them in how they serve one another, give unselfishly of themselves, and forgive with open hearts.

THE NATIONAL PASTORAL INITIATIVE FOR MARRIAGE (NPIM)

Having a successful marriage in today's culture can be challenging. The Catholic Church cares about your marriage. In November 2004, the U.S. Bishops voted overwhelmingly to make marriage a priority. They launched the National Pastoral Initiative for Marriage (NPIM), a multi-year effort to communicate the meaning and value of married life for the Church and for society. The Initiative brings together Catholic teaching and pastoral practice, social science research, and the experience of married couples. It will offer guidance and resources, including a pastoral letter, to promote and strengthen marriage. This Initiative will run through 2011.

What have you done for your marriage today?



- ◆ How do you and your spouse become lifelong partners?
- ◆ How do you negotiate the predictable stages of marriage from newly married to later years?
- ◆ How do you navigate bumps in the road and learn when to ask for help?

Visit foryourmarriage.org for the answer to these and other questions. This website was developed as part of the NPIM. Couples will find ideas for nurturing and caring for their marriages, ways to deepen their commitment, as well as links to other marriage enriching resources.

Providing help. Creating hope. Transforming lives.



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Counseling Program of Catholic Charities

The Counseling Program offers help, hope and transformation to engaged couples preparing for marriage, and to couples seeking strength, healing or reconciliation in their marriage.

Building Strong Family workshops are offered during Lent. Family activities which build on strengths of the family and promote resiliency for times of difficulty are presented in a series of six sessions. Call (701) 235-4457 for more information.



Counseling Locations

Fargo (701) 235-4457
Grand Forks (701) 775-4196
Langdon (701) 256-2354

To learn about our other programs or to donate, please visit www.catholiccharitiesnd.org.