

COMMUNION OF LIFE AND LOVE

Notes on Marriage and Family Life

Preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage

Prepare for the *gift of self* during Lent

Pope Benedict XVI, in his encyclical “God is Love,” says that love, “seeks the good of the beloved: it becomes renunciation and it is ready, and even willing, for sacrifice.” This is the essence of discipleship—and the heart of marriage. If you are preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage, Lent is a wonderful time to examine how you “seek the good in the beloved.” This season is an opportunity for you to pray together (maybe for the first time), make a pilgrimage to shrines around the Archdiocese (www.archdiocese-phl.org/catholicshrines), or sacrifice your time and talent (volunteer together at a soup kitchen, participate in Operation Rice Bowl, etc). There are many ways to experience the presence of God during Lent, and making the Lenten pilgrimage *together* strengthens not only your relationship with the Lord, but the bond of love between you as well.

[M]an cannot ...always give, he must also receive. Anyone who wishes to give love must also receive love as a gift. Certainly, as the Lord tells us, one can become a source from which rivers of living water flow (cf. Jn 7:37-38). Yet to become such a source, one must constantly drink anew from the original source, which is Jesus Christ, from whose pierced heart flows the love of God (cf. Jn 19:34).

~Pope Benedict XVI

Events

Marriage Retorno: A prayer retreat for married couples wanting to deepen their relationship with one another in the Lord. April 13-15, 2007, Franciscan Spiritual Center in Aston, PA. Cost is \$250/couple. Contact Joe and Mary Ward for more information—215.362.8699.

Retrouvaille: Resources for married couples experiencing difficulties in their relationship. For help call 1.800.470.2230, or log on to www.retrouvaille.org. Upcoming retreat for couples April 20-22, 2007 at the Holiday Inn West Chester.

PA Catholic Medical Assoc. and PNFPN: *Natural Family Planning: The Best Kept Secret of the Catholic Church*, a conference at St. Mary Medical Center, Langhorne, PA. Go to www.pnfpn.org for more information.

Life in the Domestic Church

Lent 2007—Try Something New!

Each year when the season of Lent comes around, we resolve to make sacrifices, pray more, and do more charitable works. But as time goes on, some of these resolutions fall by the wayside. This year, why not get the whole family involved in making the most of the season by trying something new :

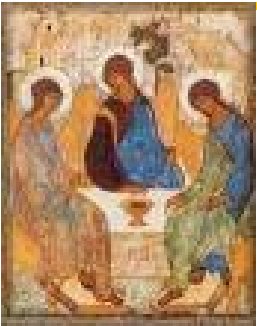
Stations of the Cross—this devotion has been part of our Church for centuries, and many parishes offer the service throughout Lent. Try making a “pilgrimage” to different parishes every week during Lent for Stations.

Rosary—You may have the best of intentions to pray the daily rosary during Lent, but find yourself dropping the practice after a short time. Try praying the Sorrowful Mysteries as a family on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Visit holy sites in the area—The best kept secret in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia are its many shrines : Our Lady of Czestochowa, St. John Neumann, St. Gianna Beretta Molla and other shrines are all within driving distance. No need to travel to Europe to make a pilgrimage when you can visit our own shrines to pray, and to learn more about holy men and women who are our models—and our friends.

NFP in the Archdiocese

Want to learn more about what the Church teaches about family, children, and married love? Visit the Family Life page on the Archdiocesan website: www.archdiocese-phl.org/evangelization. Click on “Family Life” to find a schedule of natural family planning classes in the Archdiocese; other NFP resources in Philadelphia and around the country; and a *Frequently Asked Questions* page about NFP, contraception, and what the Church says about God’s plan for married love. If you can’t find a particular resource, or an answer to your question, email the Family Life Office at famlife@adphila.org



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Notes for Clergy on Marriage and Family Life

FOCCUS Formation for Pre-Cana Teams

FOCCUS is a pre-marital inventory designed to initiate dialogue between men and women preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage. The **best** utilization of the FOCCUS is for a trained facilitator to meet with the couple to discuss the inventory results. Becoming a **FOCCUS Facilitator** is a wonderful way for individuals and couples to participate in the marriage preparation apostolate. The Family Life Office will sponsor **FOCCUS Facilitator Formation on Tuesday May 8 at the Archdiocesan Office Center, from 6:30-8:30 PM.** This session is ideal for priests, deacons, and married couples appointed by their pastors, who are interested in facilitating FOCCUS with couples preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage. A trained facilitator will provide an overview of the inventory, and participants will practice facilitation skills to aid engaged couples in discussion of issues surfaced by the FOCCUS inventory. If you would like to attend this session, or if you have identified a couple/individual in your parish who would be interested in this apostolate, contact the Family Life Office at 215-587-5639 or famlife@adphila.org to register.

Family Life Website has resources for YOU

The Archdiocesan website offers lots of information on just about anything you need to know about the Catholic Church in the Philadelphia area. The website just got better! The Family Life Office page now has more resources available for pre-Cana teams, including brochures on NFP and hand outs that can be used in marriage prep classes. You can also find out about the annual Wedding Anniversary Mass, find groups ministering to separated and divorced Catholics, and our new Bereavement Support Directory. More resources are on the way, including family-friendly websites, links to important Church documents related to marriage and the family, and prayer resources. Log on to the Archdiocesan website at www.archdiocese-phl.org/evangelization. Click on "Family Life," and go to the information you need! You can also email us at famlife@adphila.org. Let us know if there are resources, web links or other information you'd like to see on the site, and we'll work on it. The Family Life webpage is for YOU and your parishioners, and one more way to "proclaim the gospel of the family" !

Save the Date: Archdiocesan Anniversary Mass Sunday, May 6, 2007 with Cardinal Rigali Cathedral Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul

Cardinal Justin Rigali invites the Wedding Jubilarians and their families to thank God for the gift of their union and proclaim the "gospel of the family" by celebrating the Eucharist with our Archdiocesan family.

11 am: Mass for couples celebrating 50 or more years of marriage from Philadelphia and Montgomery counties

3 pm: Mass for couples celebrating 50 years of marriage from Bucks, Chester, and Delaware counties, and couples celebrating 25 years of marriage from all counties.

No RSVP is necessary

Watch for posters advertising the Masses coming to your parish soon!

Archdiocese Offers NFP Witness Couple Resource for Marriage Preparation

The Family Life Office is happy to offer the **NFP Witness Couple Resource** to assist parishes with marriage preparation and enrichment programs. The Marriage Preparation Policy directs that every marriage preparation program include a presentation on *"Natural Family Planning which builds upon Church teaching on human sexuality and the principle of Responsible Parenthood. It is recommended that this include a witness component from a NFP practicing couple."* The parish can access the NFP Witness couple resource by contacting the Family Life Office. The witness couples have been prepared by the Family Life Office to speak to the principles and experience of NFP within their marriages. It is requested that the couple receive a \$100 stipend from the parish. If you would like more information about the NFP Witness Couple Resource please contact the Family Life Office at 215-587-5639, or email at famlife@adphila.org.

Today, it is necessary to proclaim with renewed enthusiasm that the Gospel of the family is a process of human and spiritual fulfillment in the certainty that the Lord is always present with his grace.
~ Pope Benedict XVI