

Joined by God

The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony

Imagine Jesus as a guest at your wedding!

At the start of his ministry, Jesus was invited to a wedding with his mother and disciples. It was there in the village of Cana that Jesus worked his first public miracle. At the wedding feast, the wine ran out, which would have been a great embarrassment for the couple and their families. Jesus discreetly told the servants to fill large jugs to the brim with water. After he prayed over the containers, the water became wine of the most excellent quality. (John 2:1-12)

Jesus shows how important marriage is in God's plan.

God created us out of love, and he created us for love. Each of us will only be happy to the extent that we are making a sincere and total gift of ourselves in love. When God created Adam and Eve, our first parents, he joined them in a sacred union, calling them to lovingly care for one another and to bring forth new life. God intended for their faithful, unconditional love to be a visible sign in the world of his own love for us, freely given and without reserve.

For Christians, marriage is a call to become saints together.

Just as Jesus took ordinary water and made it into wine, he intended to take the seemingly "ordinary" married life and transform it into a supernatural calling. He expects husband and wife not only to care for one another in this life, but also to help each other become holy and reach heaven one day. They raise their children to be faith-filled disciples of Jesus. The home becomes like a miniature church, a community of love in which ordinary acts of caring and sacrifice become opportunities to give glory to God.

Jesus knew that such a high calling would need special graces.

Like Adam and Eve, all of us have been damaged by sin. We each struggle with selfishness and imperfection in many areas of our lives. It is not easy for Christian spouses to love selflessly as Jesus loves, and it is not easy to raise Christian children to be filled with love for the Lord. Knowing the difficulty of marital life, Jesus gave us a special gift to help Christian spouses to live out their calling.

This gift is the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

For his followers, Jesus made marriage into a sacrament, a visible sign through which Jesus gives spiritual gifts. This means that, when two baptized Christians are married, he offers them special graces each day of their marriage. He gives them strength to be faithful to their vows, to love and forgive each other, to bear one another's burdens, to be holy parents, and help each other become saints.

Christian couples invite Jesus to their wedding, too!

When Catholics celebrate weddings, we usually celebrate them in a religious ceremony in church, with a priest leading the bride and groom through an exchange of vows. As they promise faithful, indissoluble, and fruitful love through their vows, God joins the two as one flesh. They exchange rings, symbolizing their new spiritual union, broken only by death.

The spouses begin a new journey of faith, walking together with Jesus towards heaven.

