



Christ in the House of Martha and Mary

the scene of today's gospel reading
painted (about 1515) in oil on a panel by Cornelis Engebrechtsz (1468-1533)

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

the 16th Sunday in the Year

July 17, 2016

Saint Bernadette Parish

Saint Mary Parish

1343 Wheeling Road NE
LANCASTER, OH 43130-8701
(740) 654 • 1893

602 Marietta Street
BREMEN, OH 43107
(740) 569 • 7929

[stbernadetteparish . net](http://stbernadetteparish.net)

Sacramental Life

BAPTISM

To have a child baptized, you must register and attend a class as a couple (unless attendance just isn't possible, in which case some discussion with Kathy Kehnast will be necessary). Sessions are held quarterly for both parishes. The next session will be this Wednesday, **July 20. Take the class before the child is born.** If you are expecting, call Kathy to register for the class.

Please don't ask if you "have to go." This is an opportunity to meet with parents of children about the same age as your little one; they are in the same wonderful boat as you are.

At least one parent must be a practicing Catholic. **Both godparents need to be practicing Christians, at least one a practicing Catholic.** If you don't **attend Sunday Mass regularly**, there is something you can do about it: Start coming to Sunday Mass. If you can't come (health, severe weather, employment requirements, etc.), speak to your confessor. He will help you.

PENANCE

The priest is available for Penance

- at St Bernadette Saturdays at 3 PM and Thursdays at 5:30 PM, and
- at St Mary Bremen on Sunday at 8 AM.

In addition to Advent and Lenten Penance Services, every Catholic priest is available whenever there is a need. There are Penance opportunities for parochial school children **four times during the year so that they will learn the beauty of frequent confession.** The Church's law requires us to receive the sacrament of Penance at least once a year.

ANOINTING AND CARE OF THE SICK

The Sick receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick **when dangerously ill, facing major surgery, or suffering from the ravages of old age.**

We celebrate the sacrament communally at a Sunday Mass before Advent and during the Easter season so that we can all pray with you for "health of mind and body."

And, we are happy to bring Penance, Anointing, and Holy Communion to the homes or hospitals of the sick or shut in. It is very helpful to **call the parish office to let us know before a hospitalization or when it has been too long** since the sacraments were last available.

HOLY MATRIMONY

Couples wishing to marry sacramentally should contact the parish office six months before they wish to celebrate the sacrament. Why so long? Because **this sacrament, not just the ceremony, requires serious preparation.** And the Church needs to be involved in that preparation. She tries to support couples through the years of their married life. For this reason our diocese offers programs to enhance married life. To learn how, watch the weekly bulletin.

Our Parishes

AT BOTH PARISHES

Fr Thomas Kessler	pastor	(614) 634-0499	wnthomaskessler@icloud.com
Kathy Kehnast	pastoral coordinator	(740) 654-1893	stbernparish@yahoo.com
Angie & Kent Kerns	religious education	(740) 654-2588	kwkerns@gmail.com
Julie & Chase Stalford	youth ministry	(740) 808-7294	maristellaspirt@gmail.com
Nikki Schmelzer	bookkeeper	(740) 654-1893	businessstbparish@yahoo.com

AT BREMEN ST MARY PARISH

Ben Factor	liturgical music		b_factor@lancaster.kl2.oh.us
Jim Schmelzer	maintenance chair		
Tyna Fox-Schmelzer	religious education	(614) 371-7702	schmelifox@earthlink.net
Bremen St Vincent de Paul		(740) 569-7929	

The St Mary Parish office is at the church vestibule.
Hours are 9-11 AM, Tu.
602 Marietta St, Bremen, OH 43107

AT ST BERNADETTE PARISH

Deacon Mark Scarpitti		(740) 438-3970	dcn.mark@frontier.com
Deacon Jeff Carpenter		(740) 681-9918	carpenter.277@osu.edu
Ann Essman	pastoral minister	(740) 653-9347	aessman001@att.net
Steve Huber	facilities coordinator	(740) 654-3137	shuber57@yahoo.com
Liz Latorre	liturgical music	(740) 243-1872	lizlatorre@gmail.com

The St Bernadette Parish office is in the Mary Good Center, across the back parking lot from the school.
Hours are: 9 AM-1 PM, MWThF; 11 AM-1 PM, Tu.
1343 Wheeling Rd NE, Lancaster, OH 43130

AT ST BERNADETTE SCHOOL

Pam Eltringham	principal	(740) 654-3137	peltring@cducation.org
Barb Huber	secretary	(740) 654-3137	bhuber@cducation.org

Saint Bernadette School is at 1325 Wheeling Rd, Lancaster, OH 43130-8701
www.stbernadetteschool.com
stberlan@cducation.org

let us pray

ON THE 16TH SUNDAY

Show favor, O Lord, to your servants and mercifully increase the gifts of your grace, that, made fervent in hope, faith and charity, they may be ever watchful in keeping your commands.

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

AND WITH POPE FRANCIS IN JULY

His universal intention is about indigenous peoples

That indigenous peoples, whose identity and very existence are threatened, will be shown due respect.

His evangelization intention is about Latin America and the Caribbean

That the Church in Latin America and the Caribbean, by means of her mission to the continent, may announce the Gospel with renewed vigor and enthusiasm.

in both our parishes

having your child baptized

To have a child baptized, you must register and attend a class as a couple (unless attendance just isn't possible, in which case some discussion with Kathy Kehnst will be necessary). Sessions are held quarterly for both parishes. The next session will be *this Wednesday, July 20. Take the class before the child is born.* If you are expecting, call Kathy to register for the class.

Please don't ask if you "have to go." This is an opportunity to meet with parents of children about the same age as your little one; they are in the same wonderful boat as you are. *If you are weekly worshippers at St Bernadette or St Mary Bremen and have attended this class in our two parishes in the past five years, speak with the pastor if you wish to be excused.*

At least one parent must be a practicing Catholic. *Both godparents need to be practicing Christians, at least one a practicing Catholic.* If you don't attend Sunday Mass regularly, there is something you can do about it: Start coming to Sunday Mass. If you can't come (health, severe weather, employment requirements, etc.), speak to your confessor. He will help you.

the RCIA — who is it for?

There are many people today who are searching for meaning in their lives. It can come about in many ways. The spouse of a Catholic partner may be searching for what will bring a deeper sense of unity to their marriage and family. Or perhaps someone you know, who, through some circumstance of life, has found emptiness but instead seeks to learn meaning. Sometimes — and this has happened each year in our parish — it is someone who is already Catholic, but who, deep in her or his heart, sees the need to look at his or her own personal faith again. It can be anyone, in any circumstance of life. The RCIA process can help to find the answer to the searching. But people may never know this — unless we tell them. It is never a question of insistence or pressure. It is always a matter of offering, of invitation! An invitation never offends. It will be more attractive if you offer to accompany. Call Kathy at 654-1893 on Tuesday morning at Bremen St Mary or any other weekday morning at St Bernadette for information.

we still need extraordinary ministers

The Church doesn't call them "*distributors*"; a distributor is a mechanical device which controls the flow of gasoline to an automobile engine; it might also be a person who puts a plastic bag of advertising on your porch. The *Eucharistic Minister* in the Catholic Church is the bishop, the priest, or the deacon. Because of the relative shortage of these, a local bishop is currently endowed with the faculty to appoint *extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion* from among a list of trained parishioners submitted to him by the pastors of parishes. These ministers are appointed for two year terms in this service in a specific parish. Their ministry is valuable for their parish. There are two reasons to have such ministers:

- They help the priest and the deacons make the distribution of Holy Communion go reasonably expeditiously at Mass, and
- They take the Sacrament to parishioners and other Catholics who are in the hospital, in a nursing home, or shut in at home, especially on Sundays.

This service is not a sign of accomplishment or prestige. It is not an item for a curriculum vitae. The requirements are knowledge and acceptance of the Eucharistic faith, as well as availability, reliability,

and decorum in service to the Church. Oh, and you would need to be a Catholic "in good standing," which means not in any public way living contrary to the law or the teaching of the Church.

We particularly need men for this task. It is hard to say why it is, but we currently have a disproportionate lack of men serving in this ministry in our parish. The women are great, serving well. But we must restore balance. We currently send the inadvertent message that this ministry is a woman thing and not for men to do. Men need to step up, too, if we are to use extraordinary ministers.

If you can help, contact Kathy this week.

be sure to serve him faithfully

Liturgical ministers—servers, lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, sacristans—should try to find a substitute when they are unable to fulfill their assignments. These are wonderful services.

do we know about you?

New Members: To register, completely fill out a "*Form for Registration/Information Changes*," available in the lobbies of the church and school or by contacting the parish office, and return it either by mailing to the church office or placing in the collection basket on Sunday.

Parishioners: If you have any changes (address, phone, etc.), fill out a "*Form for Registration/Information Changes*" and mail to the church office or place in the collection basket on Sunday.

Mass times and intentions

at St Bernadette		at St Mary	
4 PM	<i>intention of Jim & Rita Merk</i>	Saturday, July 16	
		Sunday, July 17	8:30 AM <i>for the people</i>
11 AM	<i>for the people</i>	Sunday, July 17	
8:20 AM	<i>Anna Alonso</i>	Monday, July 18	
		Tuesday, July 19	8:20 AM <i>Art Wolfe</i>
8:20 AM	<i>Charles Smith</i>	Wednesday, July 20	
6 PM	<i>John Muetzel</i>	Thursday, July 21	
8:20 AM	<i>William Mahon</i>	Friday, July 22	
4 PM	<i>for the people</i>	Saturday, July 23	
		Sunday, July 24	8:30 AM <i>for the people</i>
11 AM	<i>for the people</i>	Sunday, July 24	

get ready for Mass

If it is something special, we get ready for it. That goes for Sunday Mass. The most important way to get ready is to be in—or get into—the *state of grace* so that we can receive Holy Communion worthily. Then we need to *fast* (a tough word for a very easy task) for at least an hour before we receive Communion. And we could try to prime the pump, as it were, for hearing the Word of God as it will be read that day by *reading and pondering that little portion of the Word* of God. Those are matters of spiritual readiness.

But to go to Mass is to approach the great sacramental mysteries, approaching physically as well as spiritually. Old-fashioned rural Protestants were on to something when they spoke of wearing their "Sunday-go-to-meetin' clothes." We could all *dress up* a little bit, not to show off our fancy wardrobe but to "do something beautiful for God." And think of what we say to our kids before a trip or before a film or a concert: We tell them to *go to the bathroom ahead of time*. Emergencies can happen to just about everybody. And each of us has the health she/ he has been blessed with. But with a little extra

precaution we could be (and help others to be) even more single-minded about worship and to avoid the procession to and from the rest rooms. Thanks for thinking about all these things.

bremen st mary

ministers at mass at bremen st mary					
lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Communion	gifts	sacristan / usher	
Sunday, July 17 8:30 AM	Karen Wolfe	Abaigeal Bell Reagan Conrad	Leo Kunkler Sr, Jim Schmelzer, Karen Wolfe	John Schoenlaub family	Jim Schmelzer
Tuesday, July 19 8:20 AM	Jim Schmelzer				Jim Schmelzer
Sunday, July 24 8:30 AM	Joe Young	Sydnee Rogers, Nicole Terry	Neil Boch, Joe & Cathy Young	Joe Young family	Joe Young

summer square dance

St Mary Parish will have a square dance at Schmelzer's Grove for the family on Sunday, Aug 14, from 7-9 PM Cost is \$3 @ person.

parish contributions

The *St Mary offertory collection* for July 10 came to \$1,362.

gardening for our parish

If you would like to *help landscape and maintain the yard of St Mary*, contact Kathy Kehnast to volunteer.

st bernadette

eucharistic adoration

St Bernadette Parish has *solemn exposition* of the Blessed Sacrament at 9 AM on *Wednesdays*. We have commitments for people to keep watch for the time from 9 AM until 1 PM. We could *extend exposition further into each Wednesday*. If you can commit to a regular presence for adoration for an hour from 1-2 or from 2-3, call Kathy at the parish office.

You can come to church to adore Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament *any day during the daylight hours*.

st bernadette school registration

St Bernadette School looks forward to registering students from St Bernadette and St Mary Bremen parishes for next school year. We accept enrollment for new students grades K-5, and 3, 4, and 5-year-old preschool students. Bring a copy of their birth or baptismal certificates. St Bernadette *preschool* offers kindergarten-readiness goals, within a flexible schedule.

Elementary grades (full-day-kindergarten through 5th grade) offer a program of academic excellence and positive experiences. Make St Bernadette School *your "primary" choice for a really Catholic Education!* For information, call the school office at 654-3137.

scholarships

Income-Based EdChoice Expansion Scholarships allow more students to attend St. Bernadette School. Students, meeting the income eligibility (e.g.: family of 4, income \$48,600), can attend St.

Bernadette School next fall *at no cost* to parents, thanks to 8000 vouchers available from the Ohio Department of Education. Scholarships are available for kindergartners, 1st, 2nd and 3rd graders. This is *a great opportunity for single parents, one-income homes, fixed-income house-holds, and working families*. Every family can explore this possibility. Contact the school office for information.

ministers at mass at st bernadette

	lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion	
Saturday, July 16 4 PM	Jennifer Spiegel	Gus & Olivia Spiegel, Analisa Waibel	Terry Carpenter Rosalie DeFillippo Marguerite Grimm	Joyce Guenther Jim Kuhn Becky Kuhn
Sunday, July 17 11 AM	Teresa Scarpitti	Brooke, Bryson & Zachary Vogel	Pat Dreyer Lee Guinan Jim Merk	Rita Merk Larry Sanford Becky Wickham
Monday, July 18 8:20 AM	David Shonk	Avee Solt, Joey Mannella	Pat Dreyer	Kathy Kehnast
Wednesday, July 20 8:20 AM	Bob Christy	Addy Myers, Gunner Robertson	Mary Guinan	Mary Jane Vajen
Thursday, July 21 6 PM	Kathy Kehnast	Isabelle & Jack Gentile	Lee Guinan	Mary Guinan
Friday, July 22 8:20 AM	Jim Merk	Kendall Cox, Sarah Woo		Jim & Rita Merk
Saturday, July 23 4 PM	David Shonk	Clara & Susan Craaybeek, Eve Darfus	Tara Craaybeek Susan Garrett Kathy Kehnast	Denise McGuire Brad Rider Craig Shaw
Sunday, July 24 11 AM	Scott Wood	Collin McCrady, Caroline Messerly, Dominic Neighbor	Nancy Griffith Ben Peters Larry Sanford	Teresa Scarpitti Valerie Shaw Julia Whitehead

parish contributions

The *St Bernadette offertory collection* for July 10 came to \$7,019.

in the diocese of columbus

help needed

The Sisters of Children of Mary just excavated 4 acres of land and they need help clearing trees and building permanent pastures for their cows at their convent in Newark. Any day is fine. Call (740) 323-1977. Find information at [www . childrenofmary . net](http://www.childrenofmary.net).

healing Mass

A Mass of Healing and a Healing Service will be celebrated on Monday, July 18, at 6:30 PM at Saint Joseph Cathedral. After Mass there will be a service of healing with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and veneration of a relic of the True Cross of Christ, followed by an opportunity for each person to speak with a priest. The sacrament of Anointing of the Sick will be available. The evening will close with Benediction. All persons who seek Christ's healing are invited—especially those with cancer, heart, and other physical infirmities, and those in need of emotional and spiritual healing. Caregivers, family members, and members of the medical community are invited as well.

officiating classes

Officiating classes *for football, volleyball, and soccer* will be held at St Mary Magdalene School in Columbus starting Monday, July 25, at 6 PM. Cost is \$125; to register, visit [www . officials . myohsaa . org](http://www.officials.myohsaa.org). For information, contact Julius Palazzo at (614) 276-9373.

men’s retreat

The Catholic Laymen’s Fall Silent Retreat happens at St Therese Retreat Center from 6 PM on Friday, Sept 9, through noon Mass on Sunday, Sept 11. In reflection sessions, *Fr Stephen Hayes OP* will lead men to appreciate the value of the medieval crusades by developing his theme “*Taking up the Cross: Becoming Modern Crusaders for the New Jerusalem of Christ.*” Cost is \$130. For information and registration contact Charles Kielkopf at (614) 268-0175 or kielkopf.f.1 @ osu . edu .

get your marriage in shape

Are you exercising and dieting, jogging, swimming, and playing tennis to stay fit and trim? What are you doing to keep your marriage in good shape? Why not *try a Worldwide Marriage Encounter weekend?* The next two weekends in central Ohio are Aug 5-7 and Nov 11-13. For information or to register, contact Paul or Marilou Clouse at (614) 834-6880 or visit www.wmecolumbus.org.

bishop’s annual appeal 2016

“be his hope to others”

Here are the results at our parishes after twelve weeks.

households participating	St Bernadette	St Mary
total pledged	\$ 38,180	\$ 20,710
average gift	\$ 271	\$ 345
total paid	\$ 19,130	\$ 5,345
parish BAA goal	\$ 43,136	\$ 12,703

The Appeal *supports our parish schools of religion and the education of our future priests and deacons, and many families in need of our help.* Your gift and your prayers will help to make this year’s appeal a success. The Diocesan Goal is \$6,300,000. Every contribution counts; every dollar that we raise over the stated goal will be returned to our parishes to benefit our communities directly.

Last year St Bernadette pledged slightly over and collected slightly under the goal. Bremen St Mary pledged well over the goal and has received the rebate from the diocese. But the diocese has needs and so do the parishes.

We know *we can reach the goals* and support the diocese as well as go over and support the parishes. It requires thoughtful consideration and prayer, with every one giving according to our ability. We are blessed with much; let us remember the needs of others, as well as the needs of our own parishes.

catholic youth summer camp

Catholic Youth Summer Camp (CYSC), a ministry based in our diocese, is a 6-day and 5-night experience providing students with a week full of *high adventure activities and high adventure faith.* CYSC is open to all students entering grades 6-12, and there are 8 sessions available this summer. CYSC offers a truly Catholic and safe environment with daily catechesis that awakens faith and builds missionary disciples. A week at camp includes daily Mass, adoration, reconciliation, small group conversations, worship, service, and authentic community. For information, visit www.cyse.com.

in the deanery

help lancaster st mary athletic association

The Saint Mary School Athletic Association is still looking for some more parental involvement for next school year. Terms are

for two years beginning at the August meeting and all Saint Mary School parents (grades K-8) are eligible to apply. Visit the Athletics page (saintmarylancaster.com/athletics) to learn about the roles and responsibilities of the association. Applications can be downloaded; deadline is Monday, Aug 1. Contact Cheryl Cale with questions at ccale@saintmarylancaster.org.

confessions & weekday Mass nearby

These times sometimes change, though, so call ahead

parish	confessions	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Bremen St Mary	8 am Sunday		8:20 AM				
Lancaster St Bernadette	5:30 Thursday 3 PM Saturday; 8:30 AM on 1 st Sat	8:20 AM		8:20 AM	6 PM	8:20 AM	1 st Sat 9 AM
Lancaster St Mary	4 PM Saturday	7 AM	9 AM	7 AM	9 AM		
Lancaster St Mark	5:30 PM Saturday	8 AM	8 AM	6 PM	8 AM	8 AM	
Sugar Grove St Joseph	½ hour before Mass	8 AM	NOON	8 AM	NOON	8 AM	
Circleville St Joseph	4 PM Saturday	9 AM	7 PM	9 AM		9 AM	10 AM
Logan St John	4 PM Saturday	8 AM	8 AM	9 AM		8 AM	9 AM

living mercy in a jubilee year

mercy: beating heart of the gospel

Pope Francis writes that “*Mercy is the beating heart of the Gospel*” (*Misericordiae Vultus*). We seek God’s mercy because we know he *is full of mercy* and is overwhelmingly *generous with his mercy*. His only *requirement is that we, in turn, be merciful.*

So what we need to do is go to God, humbly seeking his mercy saying “please” and gratefully saying “thank you”. You know in what need of his mercy you are—even when the mercy given isn’t exactly what you had in mind (“You don’t always get what you want, but sometimes you get what you need!”). And you know better than to forget to say a grateful “thank you”.

But *crucial to that thanksgiving is actually living mercy yourself.* The Church helps us along in that by teaching us the works of mercy. To live mercy, we must rediscover both

the *spiritual works of mercy,*

- counsel the doubtful
- admonish sinners
- forgive offences
- instruct the ignorant
- comfort the afflicted
- bear patiently those who do us ill
- pray for the living and the dead,

and the *corporal works of mercy,*

- feed the hungry
- clothe the naked
- heal the sick
- bury the dead.
- give drink to the thirsty
- welcome the stranger
- visit the imprisoned

Learn all 14 by heart. Have trouble memorizing? Post them where you’ll see them often, on your refrigerator or your mirror or someplace. But most of all make it your daily practice to live them. Examine your conscience about them. It’s not always easy. But anyone can do it. The works of mercy are a must for anyone who seeks to follow Christ. They will bring you joy ... and bring you to eternal joy.

some ideas

combat over-scheduling ... limit activities

You can achieve *balance for yourself and for your family* by putting a limit on some of the good things. Weigh the benefits of participation against the cost (time, energy, logistics, stress, expense) to you, your child, and the rest of the family.

Family is a Priority: Family time is as important as education and outside commitments.

Childhood is a Preparation, Not a Performance: Resist the pressure that tells you to push your child to excel early.

Pleasure Has a Place in Your Lives: Our closest relationships should be a source of pleasure, not constant pressure and tension or an endless treadmill of productivity.

Leave Empty Spaces on Your Calendar: Unscheduled time encourages children to create, imagine, and see new possibilities.

Be Unproductive: Nothing will bolster your child's self-esteem more effectively than the fact that you enjoy spending time with her or him with no apparent goal.

pray for police officers

O Almighty God, whose great power and eternal wisdom embraces the universe, watch over our law enforcement officers. Protect these brave men and women from harm in the performance of their duty to protect your people from violence. Help them keep our streets and homes safe, day and night. We commend them to your loving care because their duty is necessary but dangerous. Help them to be peacemakers. Grant them strength and courage. Unite them safely with their families after duty has ended. I ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

tune in ewtn 820 am

EWTN offers extensive *coverage of World Youth Day 2016*. Saint Gabriel Catholic Radio, AM 820 can take you on an *historic journey to Poland to celebrate the Lord's mercy* with Pope Francis and thousands of young adults. Their coverage, July 27-31, includes on-location broadcasts of the events plus interviews with Catholic youth and religious men and women from around the world. For information, go to www.ewtn.com. And then put that on your calendar!

No matter where your summer travels take you, take EWTN Radio with you. Check out AM 820 Columbus or tune into Channel 130 on SiriusXM, EWTN's home on satellite radio. *No radio? No problem.* Download Tunein, iHeartRadio or EWTN's free app that allows you to stream live radio shows right to your mobile device or computer.

family transitions

Summer brings its share of transitions: in bidding farewell to familiar faces and places, as classmates, teachers — perhaps even schools, homes, or jobs — change, and as we explore new horizons on a vacation or “staycation” adventure. The US bishops' encouragement in their pastoral *FOLLOW THE WAY OF LOVE* is a helpful reminder in facing and embracing these changes:

“Your faithful love in a marriage and family is tested by change. It can also be strengthened and brought to maturity through change. The challenge is to remain open to the Lord's gracious, healing presence and to see change as an opportunity for growth.”

attend Mass wherever you go

You can learn times and locations of Mass in Catholic churches of the United States from www.masstimes.org. With a bit of planning you can fulfill your Sunday obligation when you are on the road.

prayer for our troops

Lord, hold our troops in your loving hands. Protect them as they protect us. Bless them and their families for the selfless acts they perform on our behalf. May their sacrifices contribute to just and lasting peace. And when their duty is safely served, bring them home to their loved ones and a grateful nation. I ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

natural family planning awareness week

July 25 to 31 is a time for a national educational campaign of the USCCB Natural Family Planning (NFP) Program. NFP is the *methods used to achieve and, when there is a serious reason, to avoid pregnancies*. It is based on observation of the naturally-occurring signs and symptoms of a woman's menstrual cycle. By respecting *the love-giving and life-giving nature of marriage*, NFP *can enrich the bond between husband and wife*. The best way to learn NFP is from a qualified instructor — one who is certified through an NFP teacher-training program. Although medical professionals are gradually learning more about NFP and becoming more supportive of patients who wish to use it, they are not always trained to teach NFP and don't always realize its moral significance. When couples are taught by competent teachers, understand the methods, and are motivated to follow them, *NFP can be 99% successful in spacing or limiting births*. Effectiveness depends upon the spouses' carefully following the method. Our diocese has some qualified instructors, certified by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. For information contact the Marriage and Family Life Office at (614) 241-2560 or [FLOmailbox @ colodioc . org](mailto:FLOmailbox@colodioc.org).

the Church's plan for reading God's word this week

Sat	July 16	Sixteenth Sunday	Genesis	18:1-10	Colossians	1:24-28	Psalms	15	Luke	10:38-42
Sun	July 17									
Mon	July 18	St Camillus de Lellis	Micah	6:1-8			Psalms	50	Matthew	12:38-42
Tues	July 19		Micah	7:14-20			Psalms	85	Matthew	12:46-50
Weds	July 20	St Apollinaris	Jeremiah	1:1-10			Psalms	71	Matthew	13:1-9
Thurs	July 21	St Lawrence of Brindisi	Jeremiah	2:1-13			Psalms	36	Matthew	13:10-17
Fri	July 22	St Mary Magdalene	Jeremiah	3:14-17			Psalms	63	John	20:1-18
Sat	July 23	St Bridget	Jeremiah	7:1-11			Psalms	84	Matthew	13:24-30
Sun	July 24	Seventeenth Sunday	Genesis	18:20-32	Colossians	2:12-14	Psalms	138	Luke	11:1-13

Matrimony: a Sacrament ... But a Sacrament of What?

The Catholic marriage is a sacrament. That means it is “*an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace.*” *God joins the couple, inseparably*, in the presence of the Christian community, presided over by the ordained minister (who is standing there in the person of Christ), when they exchange the vows prescribed by the Church. It is *by this action, this conversation*, that *they marry each other*. The grace that God gives is a configuring, *a profound patterning, of their lives to the life of Christ*. His life came to its fulfillment in his life-giving death. That is when he made the remarkable covenant of marriage into a sacramental thing. And that committed love is what the ritual of the wedding ceremony is a sign of. And the sacrament makes that committed love possible in the lives of the man and woman marrying each other.

The good that grace does the couple — and the whole Church, especially those close to the couple, and most especially the children with which God may choose to bless them — is *the grace of living a completely loving life together*. This *life together*, which *begins with the conversation of the public vow-sharing*, is *the sacrament*, the sign, *of the Lord’s ever-faithful love for his bride the Church*. That *relationship of the Lord and his Church is the paradigm* that is being modeled by the holy sacrament. It is the original on which their life together is based. It is this that brings us to church to solemnize the marriage.

It is important that we keep in mind that the Lord’s way of loving his bride and the bride’s way of being obedient to her Lord are not ways of loving and obeying that we encounter in any secular model. The Lord (dominus) does not domineer his beloved; *the Lord lays down his life for her*.

St Paul tells the husband to love his wife and the wife to be submissive to her husband. This bothers very many modern people. But rather than correct God for not matching his ways with ours, we should try to learn how the wisdom of his ways set us free.

The wife’s dignity is not diminished by her submission; she becomes complete in the gift of herself. It is the message of Christian love that this always happens when we imitate Christ: In humbling ourselves we are exalted.

Both husband and wife need to love, even if the Word of God makes a special point of reminding the husband of his need to love. *Both husband and wife need to be submissive*, surrendering her or his own self-interest to the good of the other, even if the Word of God makes a special point of reminding the wife of her need to be submissive.

To a lot of modern people the picture of marriage I have just painted seems like a romantic fairy tale. In real life, people will say, it just doesn’t work that way. To that I can say a hearty, “Well, yes and no.” On the one hand, we do have to admit that *it is true that we seldom run into people who live the life of love completely faithfully*. There is falling out of love, there is cheating, and sometimes there is physical or psychological violence. And always, even when there isn’t disaster, there is pettiness and inadequacy of every imaginable sort.

But that doesn’t tell the whole story. We human beings are sometimes called rational animals. While we do have many physical traits in common with the beasts, we are something far more. We were made in the image and likeness of God. And, *however tarnished the likeness, we retain the spiritual reality*. He has made us, of all the creatures, the one creature that shares his spiritual being. *We, like God, are capable of self-sacrificing love*. And we are made whole only when we live that kind of love.

Love is not only some nice trait that, in special cases, shines through the tawdriness of our beastly ways. *We were—all of us—made to give that love. And with God’s very subtle help, we are empowered to obey his command that we love*. Our being united with our mates is so much more than simply the mating of animals.

We can love. We don’t always find it easy to love, though. *We have to make an effort*. In human married love *that effort is a beautiful sign of God’s love*. We humans have to do what God does: We have to be conscious of what we are doing when we take up with a spouse. We know how we are involved in the making of new life. We understand that *our involvement, so similar to that of the animals on a superficial level, can be so like to God*.

We are *more than just reproducers of our own kind; we are pro-creators*, conscious participants in his wondrous, generous action of creation. That’s not the way it is with our livestock or our pets. That procreation is something awesome and very good indeed.

Humanity takes for its model the action of God. Is that asking too much? Well, it would be if he weren’t always there to help. He helps by setting us an example of how to live in love. Following his example is not something that comes easily. We have to try really hard, and even when we seem to be doing just that, we find ourselves failing. We don’t measure up, and that failure is called sin. What that failure isn’t, is an excuse for giving up. *We were made to be lovers. That means self-sacrificers. After the model of Christ*. And the most beautiful and effective way that loving, that self-giving, is expressed and is strengthened is in the shaping of that most fundamental thing that we do as an image, a reflection, a likeness of the love, the ever faithful love that Christ has for his Church.

All that being the case, is it any wonder that *Catholic Christians have such a protective attitude toward the holy sacrament of matrimony*? Jesus didn’t talk about it much, but what he said had a lot of clout. He said that what God has joined, human beings must respect as being truly joined. It isn’t something optional, something to be dispensed with when we get angry or when we get bored. And we will get angry and bored. But God will always be with us, to bring us back.

— Father Kessler

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