



Diocese of Trenton World Marriage Day and National Marriage Week Three-Minute Pulpit Talks – Notes for Speakers

Thank you for agreeing to speak at an upcoming Mass during the month of February in conjunction with World Marriage Day (second Sunday of February), and National Marriage Week (Feb. 7-14).

Introduction: As Catholics, we believe that marriage is not only the foundation of family life, but also a vocational call to serve – to serve each other, our families, our parish communities, our neighborhood communities, and ultimately the world. When married couples serve together in the parish, their witness becomes a profound sign of Christ’s love for His bride, the Church.

There is no substitute for a personal story, so we are grateful to you for sharing yours as a married couple who is a role model of discipleship – answering Jesus’ call to “love one another” by serving others in your parish community. We’d like the married couples of our parishes to see themselves in you, to understand that by becoming active in their parish community, their marriage can be transformed and they can begin to see their own family as a true domestic church that can make a real difference in the world.

Instructions: Your speech should be about 3 minutes long, heartfelt and passionate, expressing what the gift of marriage in the Catholic Church means to you. We suggest you write out your talk and each take a part. Please begin by thanking your pastor/priest for inviting you to speak on behalf of Catholic marriage. We recommend that you focus on the following three areas.

- Introduce yourselves, tell them how long you’ve been married and how long you’ve been members of the parish, then complete this statement – we love this parish because...
- Give personal testimony as to the importance of the practice of your faith, and how being a part of your Eucharistic community has shaped your marriage and family life.
- Discipleship (being followers of Jesus Christ) has a cost but the rewards are greater than we can imagine – describe one or two “costs” of discipleship in your marriage, then describe one or two “rewards” (blessings from God) in your marriage and family life that you could never have imagined.

Background for Your Witness Talk – Discipleship in Marriage

- As members of his church, to be a follower of Jesus, to be his servant has many implications for how we live our daily lives. Mature disciples make a conscious decision to follow Jesus, no matter what the cost. We do this in a unique way as a married couple, as we make the daily decision to give ourselves totally to our spouse in unconditional love, and to gradually “die” to our darker side of selfishness.
- Christian disciples experience ongoing conversion — life-shaping changes of mind and heart that deepen our commitment in serving the Lord.
- Catholic married couples respond in a particular way to the call to discipleship. Understanding your vocation of marriage as a response to your baptismal call has the power to shape and mold your understanding of your lives and the way in which you live. Becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ naturally leads us to serve others. It is what we do after we say “I believe.”
- Jesus’ disciples recognize God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, and the source of all things. Jesus’ disciples are grateful for the gifts they have received and are eager to use them to show their love for God and for one another.
- Discipleship and service are linked realities and make up the fabric of Christian married life in which each day is lived in an intimate, personal relationship with each other and the Lord.