



A message to the faithful of the archdiocese from Archbishop Michael Jackels

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Part 10: The vocation of marriage

According to God's plan for our happiness and for us to transform the world into the Kingdom of God, some people are called to a permanent commitment in marriage.

Marriage begins when one man and one woman give themselves to each other freely, totally, and permanently, to share life with each other, to be a helpmate for the other, and to partner with God in creating and raising up children.

God is the author of marriage, which is described in the biblical story of Adam and Eve, and confirmed in the teachings of Jesus.

Marriage is not the creation of a government, or even of a church, and so it can't be changed by a government or a church, for example, allowing for divorce or for same-sex marriage.

There is something of a marriage vocation crisis today. There are fewer people getting married at all, or getting married in the Catholic Church, And if they do get married in church, there are fewer living day-to-day married life according to what Jesus and his Catholic Church teach about it.

It isn't easy to be married, for example, to live in fidelity, resisting temptations to use porn or commit adultery; or to live in a permanent commitment, working through issues instead of divorcing; or to serve and sacrifice for spouse and children, instead of being selfish or abusive; or to be open to having children, and so having sex without contraception, sterilization, or abortion.

So, if it's so hard, why get married? Well, scientific studies affirm what the Bible teaches: that it isn't good for people to be alone; or put another way, it is good for people to live for another person, or others, say, a spouse and children.

Studies show that married people ordinarily live longer, healthier, wealthier, and happier lives, even sex is said to be better for married couples; living together without a marriage ceremony doesn't promise the same benefits.

There are also personal benefits to being married: growth in virtue from living for someone and not just for oneself; having a helpmate in life's ups and downs; and joys are doubled and sorrows halved when they are shared with someone.

And marriage is easier for church-going couples who get married in church; they understand service and sacrifice. Also, church-going married couples are helped by the grace they receive from the sacrament, by support from the church community, and by Jesus' teachings calling them to transcend self and the world.

Finally, when married people have children they have a greater potential to change the world, as science shows that children born with a mother and father in a stable marriage are better off, and so contribute more to society.

So, there are many good and attractive reasons to get married. Is God calling you to the vocation of marriage?

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