

# **BECOMING A MARRIAGE BUILDING PARISH ...**

## **Is Marriage the Invisible Sacrament in Your Parish?**

### **Is the Sacrament of Marriage:**

- just for the couple themselves?
- or is it a gift for the whole Church?

### **How often is the Sacrament of Marriage mentioned in your parish, other than marriage preparation and diocesan anniversary celebrations?**

- How can this Sacrament be made more visible without hurting those in struggling marriages, widows, the separated/divorced?
- How would more visibility affect the rate of cohabitation?

### **When did your parish last:**

- mention Marriage in the General Intercessions at Mass?
- use the blessing of married couples from the Book of Blessings?
- acknowledge and encourage 5 and 10 year anniversary couples?

### **Imagine your parish if every marriage in it were stronger. How would that affect:**

- your Sunday worship?
- the spiritual formation of children at home and in the classroom?
- the vitality of the domestic churches of the home?
- the moral tenor of your parish?
- the availability of volunteers?
- the financial status of families and your parish?
- the ability of your parish to reach out?

### **Do married couples need anything from your parish?**

- Or do couples just go on “auto-pilot” and maybe make it in marriage or surprise you when they separate and divorce?
- Are you aware of best practices in other parishes?

### **If you were a couple in a strong marriage in your parish, what opportunities would you have:**

- to learn to pray together as a couple?
- to serve together as a couple?
- to speak about the vocation of marriage to school/religious ed classes?
- to mentor other couples?
- to enrich your own marriage through spiritual events for couples?
- to connect with other married couples in study or service groups?

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**If you were a newly married couple in your parish, would there be opportunities:**

- to connect with other young couples?
- to be mentored by an older couple in a strong marriage?
- to serve together in a parish liturgical, catechetical or social ministry?

**If you were a new parent coming for Baptism preparation:**

- Would there be any marriage enrichment involved?
- Would your parish know where to find resources that include this?

**If you were a widow in your parish:**

- How could the parish acknowledge those years you lived the Sacrament of Marriage?
- What would you need around the time when your parish offers gatherings for married couples?
- Are you aware of best practices in other parishes?

**These are the questions.**

**To find the answers, your parish might:**

- ⇒ Use this page with the Parish Council.
- ⇒ Form a marriage team to look at the possibilities.
- ⇒ Attend a “*Becoming a Marriage Building Church*” networking session sponsored by the Family Life Office. (see website below for details)
- ⇒ Challenge your Family Life Committee to offer suggestions to your Parish staff and/or Council.
- ⇒ Bring in the Family Life Director for a free consultation.
- ⇒ Consult with the Family Life Office for ideas, resources, speakers.
  
- ⇒ **[www.ajdiocese.org](http://www.ajdiocese.org)** (*click Family Life, see “Becoming a Marriage Building Church”*)  
Check here for up-to-date information, resources, best practices, networking sessions.