

Today all over the world Catholics celebrate the feast of St. Anthony, the patron of our parish. St. Anthony was an immigrant who left his native Portugal, was shipwrecked in Sicily on his way to Morocco, and ended up in Padua, where he gained a reputation as a powerful preacher of God's word. When people heard St. Anthony make appeals to practice virtues such as honesty and respect for the property of others, they made changes in the way they lived. Families became more loving and more centered on the Word of God. As you can see in our statue over the tabernacle, St. Anthony is often depicted holding a book upon which sits the Christ child. The book is the Word of God, which Anthony preached. And Christ, of course, is the Word made flesh. Catholic parents generally do a good job of handing on the faith to their children by teaching them how to imitate Christ, to live according to the Word of God. All Christians should treat one another in the way that the best families do.

Marco and Jazmin, you are sharing your faith with your children, and you are setting an excellent example for them by offering your relationship to God in the sacrament of marriage. You are also anxious to have your children baptized so that they can enjoy the sacraments of the Church as well. St. Anthony would be proud. You are preaching the word of God and inviting your children to follow Christ.

In the Book of Isaiah we hear a prophecy about a person whom God has anointed to bring glad tidings to the lowly, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and release to prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the Lord. We Christians believe that Isaiah was prophesying about the coming of Jesus Christ, who preached good news wherever he went. We Christians share in this mission when we are anointed in baptism and confirmation. God expects us to carry the same good news to all those we meet. We can do this best if we practice the sacraments of the Church, as Marco and Jazmin are now doing. Marriage is never just about two people; it is about the relationship between these two people and all the rest of society. When they love each other, they preach love to others. When they pray as a couple, they proclaim Christ to the world. When they hand on their faith to their children, they join in the mission of evangelization.

Marco & Jazmin, congratulations to you both, and be assured of our prayers for you as step forward into a new relationship with each other, with your children, with Christ, with the Church and the world.