

It is always a joy in a parish like ours to see the enthusiasm that comes with a wedding. Churches are built on marriage and the family. So is society. It's families that make us strong. If marriage is weak, society is weak. But when marriage is strong, we lay a firm foundation. Every marriage starts from love, but it represents much more. A wedding signifies a commitment to form a stable household, especially to safeguard the security and formation of children. Now, we all have neighbors and family members who have struggled with this ideal. Some couples feel committed to each other, but never say it publicly. Others say it publicly but do not remain committed. Still, in its ideal, marriage makes the world a better place.

In the Catholic Church marriage is one of our sacraments primarily because of the way St. Paul describes it in his Letter to the Ephesians. We heard this passage today as the second reading. Paul says the marriage of man and woman is like the relationship between Christ and the Church. Christ loved the Church so much that he suffered death so that the Church might have life. Marriage involves sacrifice, but Paul says that when a husband shows love to his wife, he experiences love within himself; the same can be said of the wife. When she sacrifices for her husband, she can feel love, a deep sense of satisfaction.

Frank and Raquel, we rejoice with you today. We realize this is an important day for you, and we want you to know how important this wedding is for us too. It helps us to love you, knowing that you are publicly committed to each other, and that you want to have Christ as part of your union. With those intentions, the joy of this day should increase throughout your wedded life. You will ever find new ways to love each other and to experience the love and respect that we all have for you.

You will even find that the sacrifices you make for one another will express your love and increase your love. I'm sure that each of you appreciates the sacrifices your partner makes. That will help. We all love more when we feel that our love has been valued. The same is true of Christ and the Church. Christ sacrificed himself completely for you. You will find in him a partner who has been waiting to help you in married life, in ways you never before imagined. I believe that Christ also appreciates it when we value his sacrifice, spending time in prayer and service because he loved us first. Your relationship with him will also grow the more sacrifice you return.

Be assured of our prayers and love for you, that the days ahead will continue to fill both of you with much joy and deep peace.