

The last three weeks here at the Saturday four o'clock mass we've been privileged to witness the fiftieth anniversary celebration of three couples in our community: Al and Annie DeMarea, Jim and Loretta Monnig, and today Warren and Eleanor McMurtrey. It's rare for a parish to celebrate anyone's golden anniversary, more rare to have three of them the same year, and incredible odds that those three would have been married a week apart from each other back in 1951 and would worship here with us on weekends. I want to congratulate all these couples and thank them for sharing these events with us. We need a witness of faithful love. Not everyone gets to experience fifty years of marriage. Some people, faithful in their marriage, lose a partner to death before they reach that milestone. Others sadly divorce. Some of us are still single. Not everyone gets the experience themselves, but we rejoice when it happens to our friends.

Marriage isn't easy, people tell me. It has its ups and downs. A lot of the dreams get shattered, and a lot of the love has to change.

This year on Trinity Sunday we're hearing a passage from Paul to the Romans about the Christian life. It isn't easy either, Paul tells us. It has its ups and downs. A lot of the dreams get shattered and a lot of the love has to change.

Specifically, Paul says Christians suffer afflictions. He does not elaborate in this passage, but we know he could refer to any number of things: persecution by those outside the faith, disagreements among people who share the faith, and personal sorrows ranging from illness to harassment. Paul suffered a lot in his ministry. People threw rocks at him, his boat shipwrecked, he escaped one night over a wall inside a basket. If any apostle knew affliction, it was Paul.

But, he says, affliction produces endurance. If you stick with the program you can overcome one affliction after another. Endurance leads to proven character. If you overcome enough, it affects who you are, what you believe, and how you behave. You can put up with a lot more. Character, he says, produces hope. Once you become a person who has seen ups and downs, and you've survived, you have hope that you can survive more. And hope, Paul says, does not disappoint. Spoken like a man of true hope. If you've got it, you can't let it go.

This passage comes up on Trinity Sunday because it mentions all three persons. Jesus Christ gives us access to faith in God the Father, whose love is poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. The main point for Paul, though, is his optimism in the face of affliction.

Here at St. Regis we have in our midst models of people who have had moments of sorrow and moments of joy. They sit in our midst as people of hope. So if you have some affliction in your life right now, remember what Paul says. Affliction produces endurance, and endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope, and hope does not disappoint.

first communion:
can't understand everything right now, but spirit will come and
explain; all that the Father has is Jesus', and the Spirit speaks what he tells
it

what would you like to know more about, how things work?