



The Sower

The 15th Sunday of the Year
at Lancaster St Bernadette and Bremen St Mary

July 16, 2017

St Bernadette Parish

1343 Wheeling Road NE (740) 654 • 1893
LANCASTER, OH 43130-8701

[stbernadetteparish . net](http://stbernadetteparish.net)

St Mary Parish

602 Marietta Street (740) 569 • 7929
BREMEN, OH 43107

cover picture: **The Sower** painting (1888) in oil on canvas, by Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890)

Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh, Amsterdam

our parishes

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at St Bernadette Parish

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liturgical music lizlatorre@gmail.com

The St Bernadette Parish office is in the Mary Good Center, across the back parking lot from the school.
Hours are: 9 am-1 pm, MWThF; 11 am-1 pm, Tu.
1343 Wheeling Rd NE,
Lancaster, OH 43130-8701 (740) 654-1893
<http://stbernadetteparish.net>

at Bremen St Mary Parish

Ben Factor
liturgical music b_factor@lancaster.k12.oh.us
The St Mary Parish office is at the church vestibule.
Hours are 9-11 AM, Tuesdays.
602 Marietta St,
Bremen, OH 43107 (740) 569-7929

at both parishes

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sacramental life

Baptism

To have a child baptized, you must register and attend a class as a couple (unless attendance just isn't possible, in which case some discussion with Kathy Kehnast will be necessary). Sessions are held quarterly for both parishes. Try to take the class before the child is born. If you are expecting, call Kathy to register for the class.

Please don't ask if you "have to go." This is an opportunity to meet with parents of children about the same age as your little one; those parents are in the same wonderful boat as you are.

At least one parent must be a practicing Catholic. Both godparents need to be practicing Catholics. If you don't attend Sunday Mass regularly (a major component of being a practicing Catholic), there is something you can do about it: Start coming to Sunday Mass.

Penance

The priest is available for Penance

- at St Bernadette Saturdays at 3 PM and Thursdays at 5:30 PM, and
- at St Mary Bremen on Sunday at 8 AM.

In addition to Advent and Lenten Penance Services, every Catholic priest is available whenever there is a need. There are Penance opportunities for parochial school children **four times during the year so that they will learn the** beauty of frequent confession. The Church's law requires us to receive the sacrament of Penance at least once a year.

Anointing and Care of the Sick

The Sick receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick when dangerously ill, facing major surgery, or suffering from the ravages of old age. We celebrate the sacrament communally at a Sunday Mass before Advent and during the Easter season so that we can all pray with you for "health of mind and body."

And, we are happy to bring Penance, Anointing, and Holy Communion to the homes or hospitals of the sick or shut in. It is very helpful to call the parish office to let us know before a hospitalization or when it has been too long since the sacraments were last available.

Holy Matrimony

Couples wishing to marry should contact the parish office six months before they wish to celebrate the sacrament. Why so long? Because **this sacrament, not just the ceremony, requires serious preparation.** And the Church needs to be involved in that preparation. Remember, Catholics who marry outside the Church have left the sacramental life and need to change that situation before receiving the other sacraments.

The Church wishes to support couples **through the years** of their married life. That's why our diocese offers programs to enhance married life. To learn about these programs, watch the weekly bulletin.

praying with the Church

at Mass today the church prays :

O God, who show the light of your truth to those who go astray, so that they may return to the right path, give all who for the faith they profess are accounted Christians the grace to reject whatever is contrary to the name of Christ and to strive after all that does it honor. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

in july the pope is praying for lapsed christians

That our brothers and sisters who have strayed from the faith, through our prayer and witness to the Gospel, may rediscover the merciful closeness of the Lord and the beauty of the Christian life.

let us adore Him

Spend a **holy hour** with our Lord in the presence of his Blessed Sacrament in either of our parish churches. Or spend a **few holy minutes**. We try to keep both churches open all through the daylight hours. Anybody can come, any time. Perhaps you could.

feast days this week

July 18 Saint **Camillus de Lellis**, priest
 July 20 Saint **Apollinaris**, bishop & martyr
 July 21 Saint **Lawrence of Brindisi**, priest & doctor of the Church
 July 22 Saint **Mary Magdalene**

we listen to God's word ... at sunday Mass

Sunday, July 16, 15th Sunday Isaiah 55:10-11 Psalm 65
 Romans 8:18-23 **Matthew 13:1-23**
Sunday, July 23, 16th Sunday Wisdom 12:13-19 Psalm 86
 Romans 8:26-27 **Matthew 13:24-43**

... during the week

Mon, July 17 Exodus 1:8-22 Ps124 **Matthew 10:34-11:1**
Tues, July 18 Exodus 2:1-15 Ps 69 **Matthew 11:20-24**
Weds, July 19 Exodus 3:1-12 Ps103 **Matthew 11:25-27**
Thurs, July 20 Exodus 3:13-20 Ps105 **Matthew 11:28-30**
Fri, July 21 Exodus 11:10-12:14 Ps116 **Matthew 12:1-8**

ministry at Mass at st mary

July 16 & July 23	lector	servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion	gifts	sacristan / usher
Sunday 8:30 AM	Linda Qualls	Caden & Cody Fyffe	Leo Kunkler Sr, Damian & Deborah Schmelzer	Catherine Noll, April Schmelzer	Damian Schmelzer
next Sunday	Jeanne Schmelzer	Brooke Holt, Jillian Wilkinson	Pam Redding, Tyna Schmelzer-Fox, Angi Skinner	Maurice Schmelzer family	Nikki Schmelzer

at st bernadette parish

may she rest in peace

In your charity please pray for the repose of the soul of Ann Essman's daughter, Beth, who died this week. May her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace.

Mass intentions at st bernadette

Sat, July 22 Exodus 12:37-42 Ps 63 John 20:1-18



in both parishes

blood drive

The next Red Cross Blood Drive is scheduled for Saturday, July 22, from 9 AM-2 PM in the St Bernadette Parish Hall. Please try to donate blood this summer; there's always a greater need over the summer months and there are no stockpiles of platelets at all. At our May drive, we collected 28 units of blood, but also had 17 no shows, so we really need to fill those slots with donors. Blood products are used for surgeries, accidents, premature babies, chemo patients and people with blood disorders like sickle cell anemia. There is no substitute for human blood. Please make an appointment with Joyce Guenther at (740) 974-5040 or [www . redcrossblood . org](http://www.redcrossblood.org).

christian initiation

Speaking of spreading the word about our Catholic Christian faith, have you invited someone yet to **join the Church in the coming year? Will you help them by accompanying them through the RCIA process?** It begins soon after the feast of the Assumption, Aug 15. So we need to get a move on.

at st mary parish

st vincent de paul at bremen

The St Vincent de Paul Society in Bremen takes up a **collection after Mass on the first Sunday** of every month. **New members** are always welcome. Call Angi Skinner at (740) 438-0027.

summer square dance

Summer means square dancing at Schmelzer's Grove. Mark your calendars on Sunday evening, Aug 13, from 7-9:30 PM. Admission is \$4 per person.

Mass intention at st mary

Tuesday morning Mass will be celebrated for Joe Koehler. The Sunday Mass is offered for the people of the parish.

The intention for Sunday Mass is the good of the people of the parish.

Monday, July 17 8:20 AM Frederick Destadio
 Wednesday, July 19 8:20 AM Eileen Clark
 Thursday, July 20 6 PM Marty Guinan
 Friday, July 21 8:20 AM Dale Gilbert

help needed

Are you looking for a way to share your talents and time? St Vincent de Paul Society in Lancaster is in great need of help with the food pantry, the store, and client aid. Volunteering is a great way to give to someone in real

need. Consider helping one day a month or one day a week, but please consider just helping. Contact Jill or Ed Weber at (740) 654-4148.

ministry at Mass at st bernadette

	lector	Servers	extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion			
Saturday, 4:00 PM	Sandy Landefeld	Mallory, Mason & Mitchell Ortiz	Tara Craaybeek Susan Garrett	Bob & Angie Christy	Joyce Guenther Lee Guinan	
Sunday, July 16, 11:00 AM	David Shonk	Anna Hartig, Addy Myers, Jack Tencza	Pat Dreyer Patrick Gins	John & Teresa Hartig	Ben Peters Jean Robertson	
Monday, 8:20 AM	David Shonk	Mitchell Ortiz, Daschel Neighbor	Patricia Dreyer	Kathy Kehnast		
Wednesday, 8:20 AM	Bob Christy	Becca Fuller, Kyndra Nagle	Angie Christy	Mary Jane Vajen		
Thursday, 6:00 PM	Kathy Kehnast	Addy Myers, Olivia Reynolds	Lee Guinan	Paul Lonergan		
Friday, 8:20 AM	Jim Merk	Joey Mannella, Hyde O'Rielley	Jim Merk	Rita Merk		
Saturday, 4:00 PM	Tara Craaybeek	Clara & Susan Craaybeek, Eve Darfus	Terry Carpenter Marguerite Grimm	Kathy Kehnast Sandy Landefeld	Jim & Becky Kuhn	
Sunday, July 23, 11:00 AM	Jim Merk	Collin & Emma McCrady, Caroline Messerly	Nancy Griffith Rita Merk	Larry Sanford Teresa Scarpitti	Anna Sevigny David Shonk	

in the diocese of columbus

take a fresh look at your marriage

Treat yourselves to a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend and enrich your lives together. Marriage Encounter is 44 hours when married couples can get away from jobs, kids, chores, and phones—and focus only on each other. The next weekend in central Ohio is Sept 15-17. For information or to apply, contact Paul or Marilou Clouse at (614) 834-6880 or visit www.wmecolumbus.org.

helping moms who have chosen life

Angels Nurture & Disciple (“AND”) Inc is a pro-life organization that seeks to inspire, empower, and facilitate significant improvement in the educational, career, financial, and spiritual well-being of **single mothers who have chosen life** for their children. Visit us at angelsand.org to learn more. To volunteer or support, contact Gina McCauley at gina@angelsand.org or (440) 749-5477.

catholic men’s ministry

Now, more than ever, we need Catholic Male Leadership. Weekly Faith Sharing groups have been instrumental in bringing men together and fostering growth in their Catholic faith. Programs like “Iron Sharpens Iron” and “That Man Is You!” continue to grow throughout the Columbus Diocese and are changing lives. Get plugged in and learn more about the many programs and opportunities that are available. For information call Patrick Gins at (740) 536-7402.

healing Mass at saint joseph cathedral

A Mass of healing will be celebrated on Monday, July 17, at 6:30 PM at Saint Joseph Cathedral in Columbus. Following the Mass, a service of healing begins with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, veneration of a relic of the true cross of Christ, and an opportunity for each person to speak individually with a priest and receive prayers of healing; the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is also available. The service closes with Benediction. Call the Cathedral with questions at (614) 224-1295.

saint mother teresa award

FOR CHARITY, COMPASSION AND SERVICE

This new award recognizes those special women in our diocese who exemplify the life of Christ and the spirit of Mother Teresa:

women who are strong in their Catholic faith, who are engaged and involved in their parish communities, and whose example of devotion and dedication is in the tradition and spirit of this holy and humble saint. The Diocesan Council of Catholic Women will celebrate the contributions of these women on Aug 27 at 4:30 PM at Immaculate Conception Parish. For information about nomination, tables, or tickets, contact the DCCW Office at (614) 228-8601 or mjmccormick@columbuscatholic.org. To acknowledge a woman in your parish with your nomination, write about 250 words describing her spirituality and all the ways this woman demonstrates those unique attributes reminiscent of Mother Teresa’s life and ministry. Essays must be received by Aug 8 at the DCCW, 197 E. Gay St., Columbus, OH 43215.

men’s silent retreat

The annual Catholic Laymen’s Fall Silent Retreat will be held at St Therese Retreat Center from 6 PM on Friday, Sept 8, through noon Mass on Sunday, Sept 10. In reflection sessions, Fr Dave Pivonka, TOR, will lead men to appreciate the power of the Holy Spirit by developing his theme **To Have a Relationship with the Holy Spirit, His Mercy is Everlasting**. Cost is \$150. Make your reservation now and consider bringing a friend. Contact Charles Kielkopf at (614) 268-0175 or kielkopf.1@osu.edu.

marriage preparation volunteers

Looking for a way to serve in 2017? Engaged couples in our diocese need your help. Volunteer to serve on the diocesan **Marriage Preparation Team** as a speaker and presenter. Present virtues-based topics to engaged couples preparing for the Sacrament of Matrimony. **If you are currently married, and have wisdom and experience to share**, you already qualify. For information, contact Kathleen Hall at khall@columbuscatholic.org or (614) 241-2560.

plan your family naturally

Natural family planning (NFP) uses modern scientific knowledge of fertility to allow married couples to safely and effectively achieve or postpone pregnancy. Today’s NFP is up to 99% effective and completely natural. The benefits of NFP go beyond family planning; for articles and to read one couple’s story visit www.ForYourMarriage.org. For information about NFP or to register for a diocesan NFP workshop, contact the Marriage and Family Life Office at 614/241-2560 or FLOMailbox@colsdioec.org.

new diocesan website

The Diocese of Columbus has a new website—www.columbuscatholic.org. The new site provides greater access to news and information from both the Catholic Times and Catholic News Service, improved navigation and search capabilities, language translation, mobile device compatibility, and other features. Make sure to bookmark www.columbuscatholic.org in your computer, tablet, or smartphone – it’s your new gateway to everything Catholic in central, southern and eastern Ohio. For information, contact George Jones at gjones@columbuscatholic.org.

the bishop’s annual appeal

baa prayer

Heavenly Father,
 we are always thankful for all you have given us.
 We are especially grateful
 that you have sent to us your Son to be our Savior.
 That is the true Good News:
 that you love us and call us to yourself.
 Help us to live this Good News, this Gospel,
 in Faith, Hope, and Charity.
 Help us to respond generously to your love
 by sharing our material blessings
 for the good of all in our diocese.
 Send your Spirit to dwell in our hearts,
 so that all we do may give praise and honor to your name.
 We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

bishop’s annual appeal 2017

“LIVING THE GOSPEL IN FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY”

The Bishop’s Annual Appeal **has begun at St Bernadette and at St Mary**. It’s time for us to do what we can to support the programs and ministries that benefit both our parishes and the wider community. The Appeal **supports our parish schools of religion and the education of our future priests and deacons, and many families in need of our help**. Your gift and your prayers will help to make this year’s appeal a success. Every contribution counts; every dollar that we raise over the stated goal will be returned to our

parishes to benefit our communities directly. Last year St Bernadette pledged slightly over and collected slightly under the goal. Bremen St Mary pledged well over the goal and has received the rebate of \$4,947 from the diocese. So we know we can do this if, after thoughtful consideration and prayer, every one of us gives according to our ability. We are blessed with much; let us remember the needs of others. **If you have not yet been able to make a pledge, extra BAA envelopes are available in the church vestibules.**

Here are the results at our parishes to date.

	St Bernadette	%of goal	Bremen St Mary	%of goal	Diocese of Columbus	% of goal
<i>total households</i>	452		130			
<i>households participating</i>	122	27%	50	38%		
<i>amount pledged</i>	\$ 36,130	86%	\$ 17,576	141%	\$ 6,569,228	101%
<i>average gift</i>	\$ 296		\$ 352			
<i>total paid</i>	\$ 17,210	41%	\$ 5,711	46%		
<i>BAA goal</i>	\$ 42,210		\$ 12,443		\$ 6,500,000	

more to think about

safe environment reminder

A complete copy of the **parish safe environment policies and procedures**, including the diocesan policies and guidelines for parish youth ministry is available by calling either parish office. All adults who have not previously attended a **Protecting God’s Children training session sponsored by the diocese of Columbus** are urged to do so. A schedule of training sessions can be found at www.virtus.org. Articles on **sexual abuse prevention** are available at www.virtus.org. All adults are encouraged to access this website monthly and read the articles. Contact information for **reporting suspected abuse of minors** is from the parish office.

confessions & weekday Mass nearby . . . these times sometimes change, though, so be sure to call ahead!							
	Bremen St Mary	Lancaster St Bernadette	Lancaster St Mary	Lancaster St Mark	Sugar Grove St Joseph	Circleville St Joseph	Logan St John
<i>Monday</i>		8:20 AM	7 AM	8 AM	8 AM	9 AM	8 AM
<i>Tuesday</i>	8:20 AM		9 AM	8 AM	NOON	7 AM	8 AM
<i>Wednesday</i>		8:20 AM	7 AM	6 PM	6:30 PM	9 AM	9 AM
<i>Thursday</i>		6 PM	9 AM	8 AM	NOON		
<i>Friday</i>		8:20 AM		8 AM	8 AM	9 AM	8 AM
<i>Saturday</i>		<i>9 AM Mass on 1st Saturday only</i>				10 AM	9 AM
<i>confessions</i>	Sunday @ 8AM	Thursday @ 5:30 PM Saturday @ 3 PM & @ 8:30 AM on 1st Saturday only	Saturday @ 4 PM	Saturday @ 5:30 PM	½ hour before Mass	Saturday @ 4 PM	Saturday @ 4 PM

When Butting-In Is a Virtue

A few years ago a lady told me about a relative, an elderly woman, who stopped with her son at a truck stop. She saw a big menacing man wearing a tee shirt with a supposedly humorous but thoroughly obscene slogan. She went up to him and told him that he should be ashamed of himself. Would he want his mother to see him wearing a message like that. He should go home and change it right now or at least go to the rest room, take it off and turn it inside-out so it couldn't be read. What would the man do? her uncomfortable son wondered. Be violent? abusive? derisive?

In fact, the son saw the man a few minutes later, wearing the shirt inside out, so that the slogan didn't show. He was looking at least as embarrassed as the son had felt.

The question is: Did the lady have any business butting-in to what, after all, didn't appear to be any of her business? Wasn't she being nosy? Prudish? Wasn't she imposing her moral standards on someone else over whom she had no authority? I think the answers to those questions are important for all of us.

It's one thing to argue that the law should not tell a person what slogan he may or may not lawfully have on his tee shirt. In that sense, **the man may have a right to his tee shirt vulgarity**. But even if we say that, **it doesn't mean she has no right to confront him**. And it makes it all the more important to speak out **when an abuse of civil rights causes an affront to a society**. Why all the more important? Because he was doing a harm to society, but **society no longer claims its right (duty?) to assert discipline for the common good**.

None of us wants to be thought of as nosy or prudish or judgmental. But sometimes we need to take a stand for what is right. Doing that at the right time matters, too. **The virtue of prudence helps us to determine if the time is right**. Are we likely to make the problem worse? Are we going to be effective? Will we risk a bloody nose? These are weighty considerations. **But prudence belongs with courage**. We may be inclined to answer those good questions in a cowardly way. The virtue of fortitude figures into the picture, too. **The beautiful thing about courage** is not that a person feels no fear, but **that a person, who may be trembling with fear, decides to act in the right way, no matter what**.

Sometimes a Christian needs to speak up, to say what needs to be said, even when the resulting effect is in question. But that is not the same as nagging. **Sometimes a parent needs to ask** an adult child about church attendance. **Sometimes a friend needs to confront a friend** about alcohol or drug use. Or about marital infidelity. The slogan about friends not letting friends drive drunk is worth thinking about. I may be afraid of hurting a friendship if I speak up. But a real friend will take away the keys. Difficult moments may follow. But if the friendship disappears, it was not a real friendship. But the streets are safer, for me, for the driver, and for the rest of the community. And in any case, there is a need to speak up.

A long time ago a single mother told me about how she had told her teenage son that he had to leave home. He was abusing drugs, and was becoming dangerous to his younger brother. She told me her minister had encouraged her by speaking of "**tough love**," the love that a mom (or any person) expresses to the loved one, even at the risk of a lasting breakup of a vitally important relationship. To have done otherwise, this mom told me, would have made her an "**enabler**," a person who, without wanting to, was just facilitating the bad behavior of her son. That story happens to have a happy ending: The son grew up to be a respectable citizen, a good husband and father, a son who deeply appreciates what his mom did for him when she took the horrible risk involved in throwing her son out of the home. But when she threw her son out, she couldn't know anything but heart break. She took a very big risk.

The old lady in the truck stop was not dealing with someone dear to her but with a complete stranger. She wasn't going around the store correcting anyone who annoyed her: the kid with the ball cap on backwards, the person with too many tattoos or too many pierced body parts, the one who was buying cigarettes or was talking noisily on the cell phone or who hadn't washed lately. She chose her battle more carefully. The vulgar slogan on the shirt was not merely a matter of tastes or preferences. It was **an affront to civilized life**. It was **something that someone needed to do something about**.

I think the old lady was **a hero**, at least for a few moments. And I think that the mom who refused to be an enabler was a person of real courage. I think we need to ask ourselves if we are willing to show that kind of love in our lives. Or if we would rather just leave well enough alone.

— Father Kessler

Matrimony is a Sacrament ... But of What?

The Catholic marriage is a sacrament. That means it is “**an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace.**” **God joins the couple, inseparably**, in the presence of the Christian community, presided over by the ordained minister, when they exchange the vows prescribed by the Church. It is by this action, this conversation, that **they marry each other**. The grace that God gives is a configuring, a profound patterning, of their lives to the life of Christ. His life came to its fulfillment in his life-giving death. That is when he made the remarkable covenant of marriage into a sacramental thing. And that **committed love is what the ritual of the wedding ceremony is a sign of**. And the sacrament makes that committed love possible in the lives of the man and woman marrying each other.

The good that grace does the couple—and the whole Church, **especially those close to the couple**, and most especially the children with which God may choose to bless them—is **the grace to live a completely loving life together**. This life together, which begins with the conversation of the public vow-sharing, is the sacrament, **the sign, of the Lord’s ever-faithful love for his bride the Church**. That relationship of the Lord and his Church is the paradigm that is being modeled by the holy sacrament. It is the original on which their life together is based. It is this that brings us to church to solemnize the marriage.

It is important that we keep in mind that the Lord’s way of loving his bride and the bride’s way of being obedient to her Lord are not ways of loving and obeying that we encounter in any secular model. **The Lord (dominus) does not domineer** his beloved; the Lord lays down his life for her. And **the bride’s dignity is not diminished by her submission**; she becomes complete in the gift of herself. It is the message of Christian love that **this always happens when we imitate Christ: in humbling ourselves we are exalted**.

Both husband and wife need to love, even if the Word of God makes a **special point of reminding the husband of his need to love**. **Both husband and wife need to be submissive**, surrendering her or his own self-interest to the good of the other, even if the Word of God makes a special point of reminding the wife of her need to be submissive.

To a lot of modern people the picture of marriage I have just painted seems like a romantic fairy tale. In real life, people will say, it just doesn’t work that way. Well, yes and no. We do have to admit that we seldom run into people who live the life of love completely faithfully. There is falling out of love and there is cheating, there is sometimes physical or psychological violence. And always, even when there isn’t disaster, there is pettiness and inadequacy of every imaginable sort.

But that doesn’t tell the whole story. We human beings are sometimes called rational animals. While we do have many **physical traits in common with the beasts**, we are something far more. We were **made in the image and likeness of God**. And, however tarnished the likeness, we retain the spiritual reality. He has made us, of all the creatures, the one creature that shares his spiritual being. **We, like God, are capable of self-sacrificing love**.

Love is not only a nice trait that in special cases shines through the tawdriness of our beastly ways. We were—all of us—made to give that love. And **with God’s very subtle help, we are empowered to obey his command that we love**. Our being united with our mates is so much more than simply the making of animals.

We can love. We don’t always find it easy to love, though. We have to make an effort. In human married love that effort is a beautiful sign of God’s love. We humans have to do what God does: We have to be conscious of what we are doing when we take up with a spouse. We know how we are involved in the making of new life. We understand that **our involvement, so similar to that of the animals on a superficial level, can be so like to God**.

We are **more than just reproducers of our own kind; we are pro-creators**, conscious participants in his wondrous, generous action of creation. That’s not the way it is with our livestock or our pets. That is something awesome and very good indeed.

Humanity takes for its model the action of God. Is that asking too much? Well, it would be if he weren’t always there to help. **He helps by strengthening us, blessing us. Very practically, by setting us an example** of how rewarding it is to live in love. Following his example doesn’t come easily. We have to try really hard, and even when we seem to be doing just that, we find ourselves failing. We don’t measure up, and that failure is called sin. What that failure isn’t, is an excuse for giving up. We were made to be lovers. That means self-sacrificers. After the model of Christ. And the most beautiful and effective way that loving, that self-giving, is expressed and is strengthened is in the shaping of that most fundamental thing that we do as an image, a reflection, a likeness of the love, the ever-faithful love that Christ has for his Church.

All that being the case, is it any wonder that Catholic Christians, have such a protective attitude toward the holy sacrament of matrimony? Jesus didn’t talk about it much, but what he said had a lot of clout. He said that what God has joined, human beings must respect as being truly joined. It isn’t something optional, something to be dispensed with when we get angry or when we get bored. And we will get angry and bored. But God will always be with us, to bring us back.

— *Father Kessler*

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