

Responding to God's Call
Marriage and Family Ministry to Young Adults

Call to Prayer

We believe that God calls young adults to lives of service to each other and to the whole community. Many respond to this call -- this vocation -- by approaching the Church for marriage. How will we minister to them?

Centering ourselves in prayer, we bring to our awareness the proximity of God – God's intertwinement in our lives. Let us listen to God's voice calling us – calling our name. For some God's voice is a whisper; and for others God has to shout to gain our attention. Right now, we calm ourselves as best we can and we say, "Yes, Lord". And we pause to listen....

Silence

Refrain (sung)

God is love, and we who abide in love abide in God, and God in us. (Repeat)

Reader One In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through Him, and without Him nothing came to be. What came to be through Him was life, and this life was the Light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. *(John 1:1-5)*

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Reader Two: And the Word became flesh and made dwelling among us, and we saw His glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth."*(John 1:14)*

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Reader Three: At the mountain of God, Horeb, Elijah came to a cave where he took shelter. Then the Lord said to him, 'Go outside and stand on the mountain before the Lord; the Lord will be passing by.' A strong and heavy wind was rending the mountains and crushing rocks before the Lord – but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake – but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake there was fire – but the Lord was not in the fire. After the fire there was a tiny whispering sound. When he heard this, Elijah hid his face in his cloak and went and stood at the entrance of the cave."

(1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a)

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Reader Four: The call to holiness requires effort and commitment to live the beatitudes. We have seen this active spirituality in the lives of countless lay persons and have listened to their stories.

How one experiences the challenges and joys of life in the Spirit is deeply shaped by the concrete realities of one's life. The most frequently mentioned place where lay people encounter Christ is in Christian marriage and family life. We believe that Christian marriage is a vocation, sacrament, covenant relationship and mission. In the sacrament of marriage Christ is made present in a special way to spouses, family members, and overall society. The Christian family is a sign and means of unity and solidarity in our world. The intimacy of marriage, parents' all encompassing care of children, the struggle of single-parent families, single persons' relationships with their family members and friends, the battle with addictions, the challenges of caring for aging family members with dignity and love, the acceptance of love—these are recognized as means of grace....

A common thread in the laity's accounts of their spiritual lives is the primacy of relationships. The bonds of family and friendship, of neighborhood and parish are vital to lay men and women. These relationships help them form ever deeper bonds of unity with Jesus Christ.

(Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium, p. 3-4)

Reflection Question (in pairs or triads)

- At what point in your own life did you recognize God calling you into a more intimate relationship with himself? With others?
- How have I recognized signs of God's love in young adults coming to our parish for marriage?
- How can I be a source of welcome and inclusion for young adults approaching the church for marriage or those who are beginning their families in our community?

Sharing with the Large Group

Refrain (sung) God is love, and we who abide in love abide in God, and God in us.

Prayer

Presider: Let us pray. For giving us this community of love for ministry to your people,
WE THANK YOU, GOD OUR FATHER.

We trust you to lead us in ways of love and hospitality with one to another,
WE TRUST YOU, HOLY SPIRIT.

That we may grow in sympathy and understanding, taught by your example,
WE TRUST YOU, HOLY SPIRIT.

Because we want to improve in how we listen and respond to the young adults preparing for marriage in our parish,
HELP US, O GOD, O LORD.

For the vocation to Christian marriage,
WE GIVE YOU THANKS. O LORD.

For children,

WE GIVE YOU THANKS, O LORD.

For inviting us to be in community with these couples preparing for marriage...

WE GIVE YOU THANKS, O LORD.

Leader: Gracious God, we pledge to renew our efforts to support and encourage young adults entering marriage and beginning their families. May we always be aware of our responsibility to care for them, as we are all children of one Father. We ask this in Jesus' name,

Response: AMEN.