

Office of Marriage and Family Life

APRIL 2026

**STRONG
MARRIAGES
and
STRONG
PARISHES**



**JUBILANT
MARRIAGES**

TOOL KIT

MONTHLY RESOURCES & IDEAS

www.ARCHSTL.org/Jubilant-Marriages

Jubilant Marriages Theme For APRIL

Jubilantly Married Couples Strengthen Parishes



WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Jubilant Marriages Theme
- APRIL Intercessions
- Scripture Reflection: 4/12 & 4/26
- Jubilant Marriages Prayer
- Links and Ideas
- Ideas for Parents & Educators
- Hispanic Resources
- Helpful Contacts

The Jubilant Marriages Initiative focus for APRIL invites couples, priests and parishes to appreciate and fortify the important role that strong married couples play in the vitality of a parish.

There can be a tendency to take the presence, generosity, and engagement of married couples for granted in parish life. The declining parish demographics across the USA and beyond, remind us to embrace, with greater vigilance, intentionality in supporting married couples. Truly, they are the infrastructure of parish life.

This toolkit includes resources to help couples “power-up” their marriages while staying “plugged-in” to their parish community. This month we are especially focused on parish events and small group opportunities to help married couples to stay strong - together!

Your marriage is worth the intentional effort needed to keep it strong – both for your and your family – and all the precious people who are touched by the living witness of your spousal relationship...in your parish and beyond!

Be Part of a Jubilant Marriages Parish Team at Your Parish!

You and your spouse are invited to work with your pastor to build a Jubilant Marriages team at your parish - to fortify and energize couples in an intentional way.

Contact Paul Duker at the Office of Marriage and Family Life: 314.792.7178 (Cell: 314.303.5060) to register and get started as a Jubilant Marriages Parish.

Jubilant Marriages Prayer Intentions APRIL

01 Married Couples

We pray that during the Easter season, Married couples embrace the joy of the Resurrection, embracing mercy, forgiveness, and holy renewal in their lives together.

02 Parents & Families

We pray that God will give parents the creativity and steadfastness to tap into the Joy of the risen Jesus as they walk through the challenges, inconveniences, losses and successes of life with their children. May the joy of the Lord be their strength.

03 Parish Community

We pray that through the prayers and actions of our clergy and parishioners, we can support and encourage married couples who are struggling in their relationship, to find the hope and light they need.



Sunday Scriptures: 4/12

Reflection for Sunday, April 12, 2026



*These reflections are for April 12, the Second Sunday of Easter - Year A
Try reading and discussing these before, or after, Sunday Mass*

The readings this week offer us the opportunity to reflect on the multi-faceted joy and strength that God can infuse in our marriages and all our relationships.

These Sunday Scripture thoughts to ponder are the fruit of reflections of Scott and Karen Seaborn, based on years of practical experience as a married couple and diligent faith-focused study as Catholics.

First Reading

Acts 2:42-47

First Reading:

The faithful gather every Sunday, or perhaps every day, to praise God and break bread together—the Sacred Bread that is Christ's Presence—nourishing us as individuals and binding us as a community of believers.

Married couples gather for meals in their home, praising God and breaking bread together with their family—also sacred bread that celebrates Christ present in each member of their holy family and binds them together as the smallest community of believers in our larger church.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalms 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

Responsorial Psalm:

The Israelites recognized that their strength and courage in times of distress came from their Lord, and they gave thanks.

Married couples who reflect on how the grace of their sacramental love was present during past times of distress will remain courageous when troubles come in the present.

Second Reading

1 Peter 1:3-9

Second Reading :

Peter reminds us that our pains, our struggles, and our little and big deaths will ultimately result in indescribable joy.

The pattern of this paschal mystery is present also in marriage, whereby in dying to ourselves and our own needs/desires, we come to experience the indescribable joy of living in loving union.

Gospel

John 20:19-31

Gospel Reading:

Despite their behavior at the end of Jesus' life, Jesus' first greeting to his disciples after the resurrection was one of peace.

In marriage, we can choose to retain the offenses of the other or we can choose, like Jesus, to offer the peace of forgiveness.

Sunday Scripture 4/26

Reflection for Sunday, April 26, 2026



The readings & Gospel for the Fourth Sunday of Easter - Year A
Try reading and discussing these before, or after, Sunday Mass.

The readings for the Fourth Sunday of Easter invite us to appreciate God's spiritual and practical gifts that equip us to bring His comforting, patient, fortifying and quiet love to each other, and to all the people in our parish and the larger community in which we live.

These Sunday Scripture thoughts to ponder are the fruit of reflections of Scott and Karen Seaborn, based on years of practical experience as a married couple and diligent faith-focused study as Catholics.

First Reading

Acts 8:5-8, 14-17

First Reading:

We are promised the gift of the Holy Spirit and God does not go back on his promises!

Married couples, empowered by their grace-filled sacrament, are called to use their combined gifts to be a strong and life-giving presence in their parishes.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalms 22:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6 (1)

Responsorial Psalm:

Everything we need to live Christian lives in the world is present to us when we turn to the Lord as our shepherd.

This truth follows us into marriage, where couples come away from the stress of the world and find rest, refreshment, kindness and abundance in each other.

Second Reading

1 Peter 2:20b-25

Second Reading:

As Christ was patient in his suffering for the greater good of our righteousness, we too are called to do good, to choose good, even when we are suffering.

Husbands and wives are called to continually look for the good present in the other, to err on the side of charity and assume their spouse's good intent, especially during times of disagreement and conflict.

Gospel

John 14:15-21

Gospel:

It takes a quiet heart to hear the voice of Christ speaking in our noisy world today.

Married couples who take some time to be in the quiet together, to listen for Christ's voice in shared prayer, will ultimately experience the abundant life Christ offers.

FEATURED OPPORTUNITIES

Discover ways to enrich and strengthen your marriage through connection and community.

Has your Parish discovered the Celebrate Catholic Marriage Experience (CCME)?

This Date Night Event is a great way to jump-start Marriage Ministry in your parish.

Zip Rzeppa and his team at Mater Media make the process simple, enjoyable and rewarding for everyone.

The FUN date Night is followed by seven simple steps for couples to refresh their relationship one-on-one, plus it includes an easy-to-use structure to start community-building couple small groups. The CCME is a great path for couples in your parish to experience growth, prayer, and joy - with lots of laughter - together.



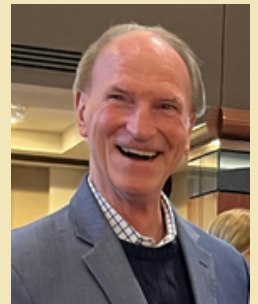
Watch these videos to see how couples at other parishes have been blessed

CCME Success & Description (03:31)-[CCME Video Link](#)

CCME Testimonials (05:15)- [CCME Video Link](#)

CCME Builds Parish Community (01:47)-[CCME Video Link](#)

Contact Zip@matermedia.org to plan a CCME at your parish!



Marriage & More Small Groups

You can get Marriage & More couple's small groups started as a follow-up after a CCME event, (or to start the marriage community-building process while you are in the early stages of marriage ministry, even before you are ready to host a big event). Marriage & More small groups are easy to execute, offer lots of flexibility and are parish-based. Find out more with this [LINK](#).

Teams of Our Lady

Another opportunity for couples to experience the power of married couple small groups is through Teams of Our Lady. This international organization offers couples the chance to go deep with time-tested activities and a world-wide community. Team meetings include a meal, prayer, shared journeys, study topics, and supportive friendship.

[Visit the Teams of our Lady website to know more.](#)



Contact St. Louis Teams of Our Lady Sector Couple: Bob and Melissa Zaegel
Email them at: stlasectorcouple@gmail.com

Jubilant Marriage Inspiration:

“As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live. Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people and hallelujah is our song. The future starts today, not tomorrow.”

-St. John Paul II



RESOURCES FOR THE WINDING PATH

Perhaps you need some help navigating a rough patch in your relationship, or you long for the vibrant sense of connection you shared long ago. Take a step toward healing and hope! Here are some options that might make a difference.

CatholicTherapists.com

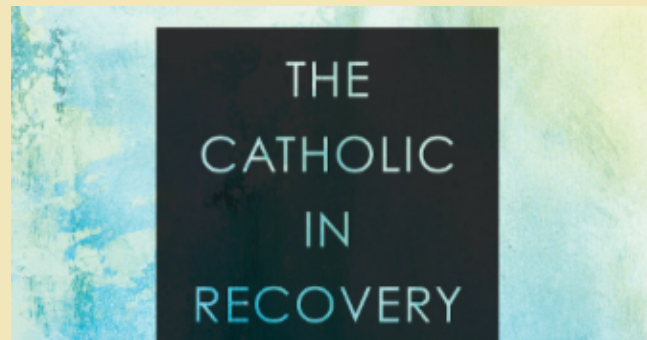


The goals of CatholicTherapists.com are to help those seeking therapy and coaching, or even those just seeking to learn more about the emotional life, to find professionals who are Catholic and faithful to the magisterium of the Church as well as to find psychological information that is consistent with Catholic Church teaching. Virtual and/or in-person opportunities are available. [LINK](#)

Or do you or your spouse struggle with ADDICTION issues?

Discover: Catholic in Recovery

Find healing and recovery from addiction through deeper relationship with Jesus Christ while also embracing the the wisdom and sacramental grace He left us through the Catholic Church. Integrates the time-tested 12-Step methodology with prayer and sacraments to find freedom from alcohol, drugs, lust and more. [LINK](#)



Catholic Money Academy

Many couples find the management of finances can be a flashpoint for difficulty in their relationship.



The team at Catholic Money Academy have an amazing array of ways to help couples “*heal your relationship with money, kiss debt goodbye, end money fights, prepare for the future, and build the kingdom.*” Parish-based group event programs are also available. [LINK](#)

Has your marriage been Impacted by INFIDELITY?



Discover that there is still HOPE.

Get help, renewal, and healing offered by **RESTORE**.

RESTORE - Affair Recovery

Whether you suspect your spouse is having an affair or if the affair has been discovered or confessed, RESTORE can help couples learn the steps and skills needed to heal and recover from infidelity.

Restore is an online, self-led marriage resource that gives you and your spouse the opportunity and the tools necessary to heal and restore your relationship. [LINK](#)



Catholic Renewal Center

Many of the challenges that can become flashpoints or dead zones in a marriage have **spiritual wounds** at the core. The Catholic Renewal Center in STL offers a array of program options to find spiritual healing, help, and hope for married couples and individuals. Discover the power of healing prayer.

[Please contact the center for additional information 314-731-6100 or \[janeguenther@archstl.org\]\(mailto:janeguenther@archstl.org\)](#)

Links & Events

Find Marriage enriching links, and information to help your marriage, or the marriage of someone you care about to be...JUBILANT!

LINK



The Jubilant Marriages Initiative spotlights great ways that Priests, Parishes, Couples, and Singles can help Marriages be HOLY and strong within their parish community.

Visit Archstl.org/Jubilant-Marriages and explore the array of resources and options to enrich your marriage 1-on-1 or in groups at your parish.

Marriage Enrichment



Ask a couple from your parish to try a **Salsa Dance Class** with you... **Salsa Date Night at Majestic Dance Studio** [LINK](#)

Time: 7:30 am - 4:00pm Cost \$75 per couple

Come learn the basics of Salsa in a fun, relaxed atmosphere. No prior dance experience is needed. In case you need a little extra coaxing to get out on the floor, drinks will be served! This class is a perfect date night with your partner! Couples must Pre-register; no walk-ins allowed.

10460 German Blvd, Frontenac, MO 63131 [314-736-6414](tel:314-736-6414)

DATE NIGHT - Comedy Sports St. Louis

ComedySportz® St. Louis is an action-packed, interactive comedy show played as a sport. Two teams battle it out for points and laughs! It's Comedy For Everybody! **Good Clean Fun!**

Perfect for a Couple's Date Night outing, or bring the family!

Couples can even sign up for a class and learn the art of IMPROV together! [LINK](#)



Or...Team up with Comedy Sports St. Louis to plan a special private couples event to build community!

Plan a private Comedy Sports Couples or Family Event just for members of your parish and make memories together.



Sunday Matrimony Moments

A weekly framework to grow closer as a couple.

Take time each Sunday to:

- 1) Be inspired by SCRIPTURE
- 2) Get MOTIVATED to improve your marriage
- 3) PRAY a short prayer together, and
- 4) Have a CONVERSATION to build connection between you.

Matrimony Moments content is created for placement in parish bulletins each week...but couple are encouraged to print and use this structure at home, or in a small group. Use this [LINK](#).



Recommended to Read & Watch:

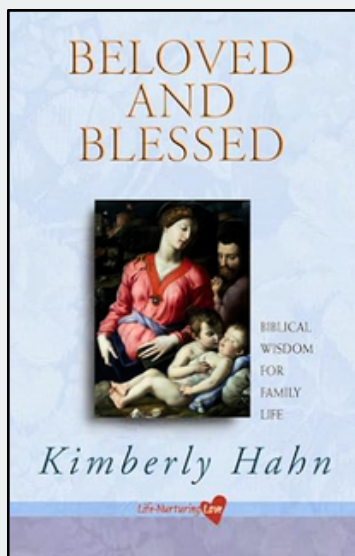
Discover some valuable reading and viewing for APRIL. The spring season is a good time for new beginnings. Take time to experience some fresh thinking that energizes faith with fortitude, and builds strong families and communities on a firm foundation.

MEN: Heroic Men - <https://heroicmen.org/>

Powerful no-cost media app for men: husbands, fathers, brothers, and sons... Created by the Catholic Men's Leadership Alliance

Heroic Men is a free platform with the best Catholic media for men. It is designed to be a brotherhood-building platform, so that men can use media to inspire conversations and host dynamic small groups in their parish. [LINK](#)

Strengthen the MAN, strengthen the family.
strengthen the FAMILY, strengthen the Church.
Strengthen the CHURCH, transform the culture.



WOMEN: Beloved and Blessed

Biblical Wisdom for Family Life
by Kimberly Hahn

The third in a series of Bible studies based on Proverbs 31, Beloved and Blessed offers tools to help wives and mothers strengthen marriage and raise holy and happy children, creating a civilization of love in your home. Applying Sacred Scripture, Church teaching, and pastoral wisdom, Kimberly Hahn helps women explore: Marital intimacy Responsible parenthood Facing the financial future without fear Strategies for disciplining and instructing children Trusting God when parenting hurts. [BOOK LINK](#)
Discussion questions help readers apply the material in a personal way, plus make the book a valuable resource for small group discussion.

Kimberly hosts a "Beloved and Blessed" podcast also: [PODCAST LINK.](#)

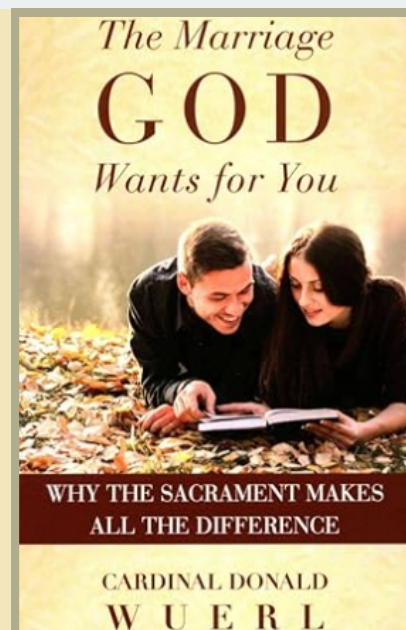
COUPLES: The Marriage God Wants for You

Why the Sacrament Makes All The Difference

by Cardinal Donald Wuerl

Most people would agree that marriage today is in crisis. What is usually overlooked even by those married in the Church is that God intended marriage to be a sacrament. The Lord wants couples to rely on his promise to be present in their day-to-day lives, and he wants to give them the grace to live out a covenantal love that mirrors the love of the Trinity.

Rather than simply a defense of marriage, this book presents the good news about sacramental marriage. Cardinal Donald Wuerl uses his years of pastoral experience and his gift of teaching to give hope and courage to both engaged couples and those married for many years and to anyone thinking about the meaning or vocation of marriage. Get a copy of the book at this [LINK](#).



Ideas for Parents & Educators



As we highlight the incredible value of married couples in building a vibrant and strong parish community, recall the joy, hope and miracles of the wedding at Cana

Holy Matrimony Role Models

Often, when imagining the wedding feast at Cana we can focus entirely on the amazing miraculous exchange between Jesus and Mary. It's good to remember the community of friends and family that filled that setting. It was no accident that Jesus decided His first public miracle would be to help a young married couple as they began their married life together. We need to value and celebrate all the marriages in our families and parish community. Married couples offer a powerful sign of HOPE to remind us of what our our souls truly long for -- the never-ending marriage FEAST in heaven.



For LITTLES

Invite little children to mark on a calendar the day of Mommy and Daddy' wedding anniversary:

- Plan to pray a prayer for mommy & daddy that day
- Plan to take a "kiss-cam" pic of mommy & daddy that day!
- Plan to eat cake to celebrate mommy & daddy's marriage that day



For MIDDLES

Invite middle-grade boys and girls to share their favorite silly story or video of mom and dad's or a family member's wedding. See if they have thought of any ideas of what they would include in planning a great wedding for themselves or someone else.

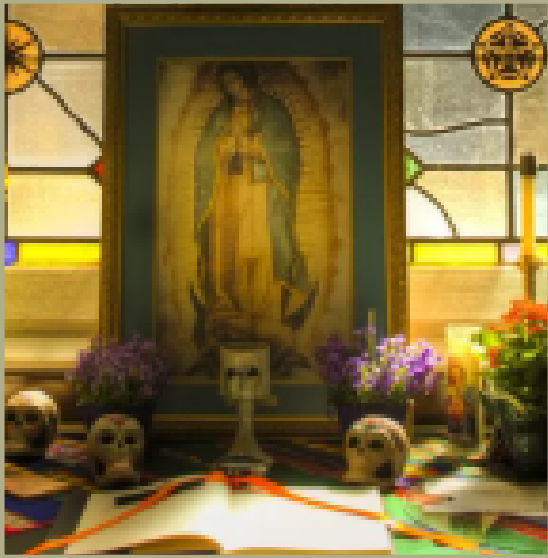


For TEENS

Invite teens to pray for their parent's marriage to be strong with a relationship that is happy, healthy and holy. Then invite them to say one Hail Mary each day for their future spouse. (Let them know this includes a religious vocation in which their spouse would be Christ and his Church.)

RECURSOS HISPANOS

Descubre eventos e información especialmente para parejas y familias hispanas casadas.



ARCHSTL Hispanic Ministry

Visita la página del Ministerio Hispano en el sitio web de la Arquidiócesis para obtener información sobre preparación matrimonial, además de otros recursos y eventos en español.

LA OFICINA DE MINISTERIO HISPANO Es un lugar donde nuestra misma fe, bautismo, comunión y misión en el Señor se hacen visibles. Junto con el Grupo de Líderes Pastorales Hispanos, y otras agencias arquidiocesanas, la oficina brinda apoyo directo a las parroquias con católicos hispanos en toda la arquidiócesis, ejerce su compromiso con la Evangelización, Pastoral de Conjunto, y la integración de la comunidad católica en la vida de la arquidiócesis.

Equipos Notre Dame

Equipos de Nuestra Señora - Movimiento Católico internacional para matrimonios cristianos

Melissa Zaegel, mazaegel@gmail.com



Las parejas pueden encontrar animo y conocimiento viendo el contenido del video del reciente Congreso Internacional de Las Familias.

Vea el sitio web para más contenido sobre este evento:

<https://cifam.mx/>

Por Tu Matrimonio

Vida de Casados:

La vida matrimonial es una vocación. Todos los matrimonios pueden crecer en conocimiento, fe, alegría y amor.

ENLACE:

<https://www.portumatrimonio.org/vida-de-casados/>





Pray THE JUBILANT MARRIAGES PRAYER

Jesus, Your life, death, and resurrection was the greatest act of love of all time, pouring forth streams of life-giving grace in the Sacraments. Today, we ask you to renew our HOPE - through the daily lived Sacrament of Matrimony.

Inspire us to cherish the extraordinary value of the Sacrament of Matrimony in our families and communities to renew familial love among all people. Enable us to build a Culture of Matrimonial Love in our parish – to energize couples who are stable, support couples in distress, empower couples who carry heavy burdens, and rekindle a matrimony mindset in our youth.

Unleash the power of Matrimonial Grace in our parish - through the leadership of our clergy, the faithfulness of married couples, and the wisdom of the widowed, to inspire each parishioner to live as a joy-filled daily sign of the sacrificial love of God .

Amen.

You are encouraged to pray this prayer in your home with your spouse and/or family.
Prayer Cards are available from the Office of Marriage & Family Life

Who Can Help?



This handy contact page gives you at-a-glance ease to get help to implement Jubilant Marriages recommended resources or ideas in your own life or in your parish.

Description	Phone	Email Address
Paul Duker <i>Manager - Office of Marriage & Family Life</i>	314-792-7178	paulduker@archstl.org
Cathy Gilmore <i>Jubilant Marriages Coordinator</i>	636-391-3999	cathygilmore@archstl.org
Sr. Maureen Martin, ACSJ <i>Family Life</i>	314-792-7612	srmaureenmartin@archstl.org
Amy Buehrle <i>Pastoral Associate - Northern Vicariate</i>	314-792-6512	amybuehrle@archstl.org
Tammy Chumley <i>Pastoral Associate - Western Vicariate</i>	314-792-6456	TammyChumley@archstl.org
Jennifer Meehan <i>Pastoral Associate - Southern Vicariate</i>	(314) 363-6945	jmeehan@archstl.org

✦ Get the Jubilant Marriages Tool Kit sent to your inbox each month. Sign up at: <https://archstl.flocknote.com/jubilantmarriage>



About Jubilant Marriages

Guided under the leadership of Archbishop Mitchell Rozanski, Jubilant Marriages offers a new vision for couples and parishes in the Saint Louis Archdiocese to tap into the **MATRIMONIAL POWER** of Catholic Marriages. This initiative will enable Catholic Matrimony to be embraced as a daily lived sacrament and a powerful sign of God's presence.

*"The vision of Jubilant Marriages is to establish a **Catholic Culture of Holy Matrimony**; anchored in the truth that the loving relationship of a couple is a powerful sacramental Presence of God."*
- Father Rosy Rosebrough

Starting in spring 2025, the Jubilee Year of HOPE, monthly Jubilant Marriages themes will spotlight important ways each marriage can be holy, healthy, and happy - and provide practical information that helps married couples and parishes to thrive.

Visit ARCHSTL.org/Jubilant-Marriages to discover more!

