



Office of Marriage  
and Family Life

**JANUARY 2026**

# **JUBILANT MARRIAGES AND THE SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY**



ARCHDIOCESE  
OF ST. LOUIS



## **PARISHIONER TOOL KIT**

**MONTHLY RESOURCES & IDEAS**

# Jubilant Marriages Theme For JANUARY

## *Jubilant Marriages and the Spiritual Works of Mercy*



The Jubilant Marriages Initiative focus for JANUARY invites couples, priests and parishes to appreciate the way that the Sacrament of Matrimony empowers couples with the grace to do great good in the world through the **Spiritual Works of Mercy**.

Think about how God might be calling you to embrace Spiritual Works of Mercy. The lifestyle choices of Catholic married couples can shine a light of blessing that touches everyone. Here are a few simple examples to get you started:

- **Counsel the doubtful** by taking a teen out to breakfast to listen and offer encouragement.
- **Admonish the sinner** by offering hope and alternatives to someone who participates in the abortion business.
- **Instruct the ignorant** by reading virtue-rich books to children who only know empty pop-culture stories.
- **Comfort the afflicted** by spending time and showing love to someone who is sick, sad or lonely.
- **Bear wrongs patiently** by praying for the person who cuts you off in traffic instead of unleashing an angry response.
- **Forgive offenses willingly** by thinking specifically of a person who hurt you and choose to pray for the grace to forgive him or her.
- **Pray for the living and the dead** by praying for the souls in purgatory each time you use holy water entering a church.

This month's toolkit includes options for spiritual service-minded outings, reading, and family opportunities that can help you build a family lifestyle of joyful service to God and others.

### WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- Jubilant Marriages Theme
- Scripture Reflection: 12/14 & 12/28
- JANUARY Intercessions
- Jubilant Marriages Prayer
- Opportunities to Help Others
- Links and Ideas
- Ideas for Parents & Educators
- Hispanic Resources
- Helpful Contacts

### 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.



# Sunday Scriptures: 1/11

## Reflection for Sunday, January 11, 2026



*These readings are for the Sunday after Epiphany (Cycle A)*

The readings for this Sunday include: Isaiah's gentle Servant, Peter's vision of Christ's impartial healing goodness, and the Father's delighted blessing over the Son at His baptism. Together these can apply to marriage as a school of the Spiritual Works of Mercy: spouses are called to handle each other with unbreakable tenderness, to go about every day doing good that liberates the other as he or she carries life's burdens. These actions, combined with affirming words that speak life-giving love, echo the Father's pleasure with His Son and unleash graces that kindle the fire of married love. The home thus becomes a radiant sign of God's own merciful heart.

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### First Reading

Isaiah 42: 1-4, 6-7

**First Reading:** *"Behold my servant... a bruised reed he will not break... I have called you... to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from confinement"*

**Reflection:** *In the gentle strength of the Suffering Servant, each of us, and especially married spouses, are reminded that true love refuses to crush the other when they are fragile, but instead becomes the light that patiently leads one another out of darkness and self-imposed prisons of resentment or fear.*

**Application for couples:** *This week, when your spouse feels like a "bruised reed" (tired, discouraged, or hurting), choose one deliberate act of tenderness that reassures them "I will not break you," and gently speak a word of hope that helps free them from whatever confines their heart.*

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### Responsorial Psalm

Psalms 29: 1-2, 3-4, 9-10.

*"The Lord will bless His people with peace."*

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**Second Reading:** *"God shows no partiality... he went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil"*

**Reflection:** *Peter's revelation that God has no favorites invites husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, and all of us in God's family to imitate Christ's impartial, overflowing goodness—actively seeking to "do good" and heal the places where the evil one has sown discouragement, bitterness, or division in their shared life.*

**Application for couples:** *Identify one way your spouse feels oppressed (by work, past wounds, anxiety, or even by your own habits), and this week perform one concrete act of selfless service that brings healing and reminds them they are infinitely favored by God through your love.*

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### Second Reading

Acts 10:34-38

**Gospel:** *"This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased"*

**Reflection:** *At Jesus' baptism the Father speaks tender, affirming love over his Son before any public ministry begins; so too in marriage and family life, speaking words of delight and blessing over one another—especially in ordinary, non-heroic moments—is a powerful spiritual work of mercy that strengthens the heart for everything that follows.*

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### Gospel

Matthew 3:13-17

**Application for couples:** *Once a day this week, take a moment to look your spouse in the eyes and tell them one specific reason you are pleased with them and thank God out loud for the gift they are to you, echoing the Father's voice at the Jordan.*

# Sunday Scripture 1/26

*Reflection for Sunday, January 26, 2026*



The readings & Gospel for the third Sunday in Ordinary Time ( Cycle A)

Nehemiah's life-giving proclamation of the Word, Paul's vision of the one suffering-and-rejoicing Body, and Jesus' inaugural "today" of Jubilee mercy together paint marriage as a living liturgy: spouses stand side by side to let the Word pierce and then flood them with joy. They bear one another's burdens and honor one another's gifts as members of the same Body, and they are invited to declare a personal Jubilee of forgiveness and liberation. Interwoven Spiritual Works of Mercy make the home a place where the joy of the Lord is the source of their strength and married love burns ever brighter.

## First Reading

**Nehemiah 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10**

## Responsorial Psalm

**Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5**  
*"Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in His ways."*

## Second Reading

**1 Corinthians 12:12-30**

## Gospel

**Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21**

**First Reading:** *"They read plainly from the book of the law... all the people wept... This day is holy to the LORD... the joy of the LORD is your strength"*

**Reflection:** When the Word of God is proclaimed and internalized in the home, it first can move spouses to honest tears of repentance, which can open floodgates of holy joy that fortifies the strength of the marriage and family.

**Application for couples:** This week, choose one evening to read a short passage of Scripture together aloud (perhaps the Sunday Gospel), pause in silence for each of you to name one way it touches your heart or perhaps reveals a fault, then end by thanking God together and sharing one concrete reason the other person brings you joy—letting that joy of the Lord renew your strength together.

**Second Reading:** *"If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy... You are Christ's body, and individually parts of it"*

**Reflection:** In the mystery of the one Body, married couples are not two separate bodies but one flesh—one living member of Christ—so the pain of one spouse is the pain of both, and the glory of one is the glory of both. A couple who compassionately bears burdens together and joyful honors each other's gifts – lives the the spiritual works of mercy as a daily rhythm that keeps their love alive.

**Application for couples:** When your spouse is struggling this week, intentionally "suffer with" them (sit close, listen without fixing, pray over them); when your spouse does something well (even something small), honor them out loud in front of others or in a note, so the whole "body" of your marriage rejoices together.

**Gospel:** *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to proclaim liberty to captives... Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing"*

**Reflection:** Jesus announces that the Jubilee of God's mercy begins "today," His example invites husbands and wives to live as a continual Jubilee for each other—proclaiming forgiveness, releasing old debts, comforting grief, and setting one another free from the captivity of bitterness or fear.

**Application:** Choose one lingering hurt, resentment, or unspoken expectation you are still holding against your spouse; this week, in a quiet moment, explicitly name it and release it, and tell them, "Today I set you free from this; I choose mercy," letting the Spirit-filled "today" of Jesus heal and re-energize your love.



# Jubilant Marriages Prayer Intentions For JANUARY

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## 01 Married Couples

We pray that married couples will choose lifestyles of spiritual generosity by intentionally making time for and embracing opportunities to do the Spiritual Works of Mercy.

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## 02 Youth & Faith

We pray that young people will be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit to hold no grudges, offer loving encouragement to those who suffer with anguish or doubt, and choose to pray for both the living and the dead.

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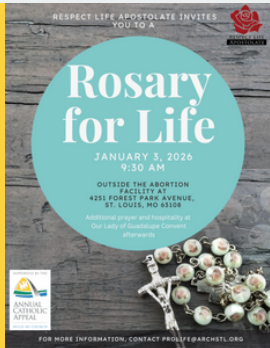
## 03 Parenting Holy Families

We pray for God to empower parents with creative and effective means to incorporate the Spiritual Works of Mercy in their home, family and community.



# FEATURED OPPORTUNITIES

Discover ways to enrich and strengthen your marriage through experiences in which you can exercise the Spiritual Works of Mercy as a couple together.



## Rosary for Life on January 3

Couples are invited to join in prayer - showing love for mothers and their unborn children who are targeted by the abortion industry. Accompaniment, advocacy and intercession for women and men, children and workers impacted by abortion provides multi-faceted opportunities for Spiritual Works of Mercy.

Find out more about the **Rosary for Life event on January 3 from 9:30-10:30 AM** Forest Park Avenue 4251 St. Louis, MO 63108: <https://www.archstl.org/event/rosary-for-life>

## Pro-Life Mass with the Archbishop

**Saturday, January 24 at 10AM, Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis;**  
Join Archbishop Mitchell Rozanski and the Respect Life Apostolate of the Archdiocese of St. Louis for the 2026 Roe v. Wade Memorial Mass to ask God to end abortion in Missouri and the U.S., to honor those lost to abortion, to pray for those wounded by abortion in need of healing, and to commit to building a "culture of life and love" (Evangelium Vitae).



## Get Equipped for Forgiveness

The Catholic Renewal Center team is hosting a Generational Prayer Service. Come and give God's grace a chance to break hurtful patterns, offer balm for spiritual wounds, and bring blessing to your family. Offering and receiving forgiveness is powerful, but can be difficult. Come and get strengthened for healing and transformation.

**Archbishop Rigali Center Chapel on Sunday, January 18, from 1- 3PM**  
**The event includes the Sacrament of Reconciliation and prayer ministry.** Link for more details: [Generational Prayer Service](#)

## Volunteer for Cardinal Ritter Senior Services

Couples who feel the Lord calling them to "comfort the afflicted" can find an array of options through Cardinal Ritter Senior Services. There is great power in friendly banter, gentle gestures, or words of encouraging prayer in the lives of the elderly who can suffer from lack of energy, pain, or loneliness. Here is the link to some great ways to volunteer that can utilize a broad range of skills or abilities.

<https://cardinalritterseniorservices.org/volunteer/>



## Jubilant Marriage Inspiration:

"Marriage is to help married people sanctify themselves and others. For this reason they receive a special grace in the sacrament which Jesus instituted. Those who are called to the married state will, with the grace of God, find within their state everything they need to be holy."

– Saint Josemaría Escrivá





# 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.

Visit [Archstl.org/Jubilant-Marriages](https://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



**Couples, give your marriage the gift of a World Wide Marriage Encounter Weekend.**

**The first WWME weekend in 2026 is February 6 - 8**

Courtyard Marriott 4341 Veterans Memorial Parkway, St. Peters, MO 63376

There is a reason this marriage-strengthening ministry has lasted and grown for over 50 years. See all the upcoming dates for 2026: [HERE](#)  
Find out more about why Marriage Encounter Weekends have been such a game changer for so many couples at this [LINK](#).

**or try out the WWME "God Chose You for Me" One Day Mini-Retreat**  
**Recharge the spiritual power of your relationship! Time: 9:30 am - 4:00pm**  
**Cost \$100 Includes Lunch**

STL locations and dates:

February 28 - Immaculate Conception, Dardenne Prairie, MO

March 21 - St. Clare of Assisi, Ellisville, MO

["God Chose You For Me" Registration Link](#)

*Marriage enrichment from the coziness of your couch when it's cold outside.*

### **Chris Stefanick Marriage Inspiration on Formed**

Practical tips for real life Catholics with Chris and Natalie Stefanick

Part 1: Marriage and Romance Q & A [Link](#)

Part 2: Loving Others with a Wounded Heart [Link](#)

*Want to go deeper?*

**Experience RENEWED: 7 Steps for an Amazing Marriage Series** with Chris and Natalie Stefanick : [Link](#)





# Recommended Reading:

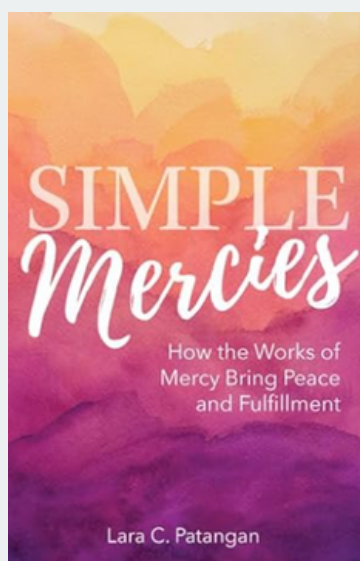
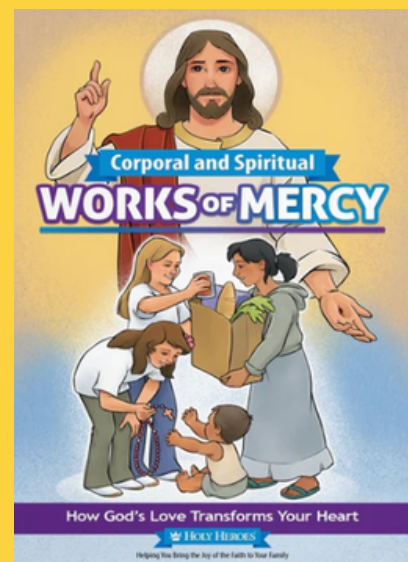
Discover some valuable reading for January. This season is often seen as the launching pad for resolutions to build positive new habits. The books featured below offer great guidance and inspiration. Each title helps couples and families gain fresh understanding - and motivation - to integrate the Works of Mercy into their family lifestyle.

## KIDS: Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy

Discover a book from the team at Holy Heroes called: **Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy - How God's Love Transforms Your Heart**

Charming artwork engages children's minds and hearts with practical ways to live the love-in-action side of the Catholic Faith. "Concise text combined with meaningful colorful pictures to create a lasting memory. Not the usual simple lists (that don't connect with the reader) or overly detailed explanations (that most people never read). This book engages the reader with a life-transforming message and a variety of practical applications. Highly recommended for all Catholic families." -- Steve Wood (Family Life Center -- Dads.org)

This is a companion book to the popular Holy Heroes "Works of Mercy" card game and "Works of Mercy" Coloring Book. Find out more at this [LINK](#).



**FAMILY: Simple Mercies: How the Works of Mercy Bring Peace and Fulfillment**

by Lara C. Patangan provides practical, do-able ways to live the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy as part of family life. It emphasizes that practicing mercy isn't passive, but rather, is a lifestyle of service that empowers us to fulfill our purpose to love and serve God, and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

*"The works of mercy aren't just another gimmick. They are game-changers. When I tried these works of mercy as an alternative to the creed of the secular world, I found less striving, less busying, less dissatisfaction, less emptiness, and more time for my relationship with God, my family, and the people I love. I found more meaning, more compassion, and more clarity than I'd ever found in anything the world offered."* (Book excerpt pages:196-97)

Find out more at this [LINK](#).

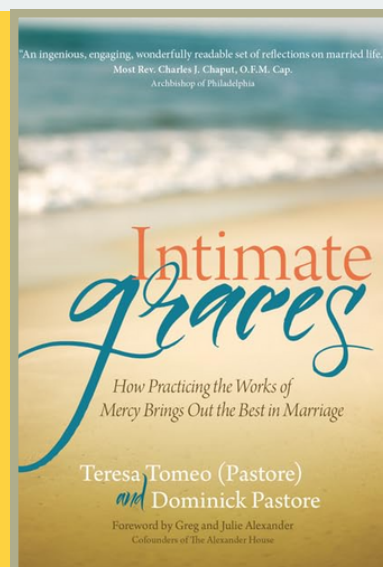
## COUPLES: Intimate Graces

by Teresa Tomeo (Pastore) & Dominick Pastore

In the book *Intimate Graces*, popular Catholic author Teresa Tomeo and her husband, Dominick Pastore, invite couples to enrich their marriages by practicing the fourteen Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy. Through their own story and that of other married couples, Tomeo and Pastore demonstrate how embracing the Works of Mercy can foster deeper intimacy and bring out the best in a marriage.

This can be a great book for couples to read one-on-one together, or use for a multi-week small group book study.

Find out more at this [Link](#).





# Ideas for Parents & Educators

*In January, we focus on the way spiritual generosity and mercy flows through married couples who embrace the virtue of gratitude in their hearts.*



## Holy Matrimony Role Models: Juan Diego and his wife Maria Lucia from Mexico

This married couple were early first converts to Christianity when Catholic Missionaries arrived in Mexico. Often walking miles together to go to Holy Mass, they eagerly embraced the true God, to whom was offered grain (consecrated bread) and gratitude (Eucharist) instead of pagan rituals that often involved brutal human sacrifice.

After his wife's death, Juan Diego went on to have a supernatural encounter with Our Lady Of Guadalupe through whom spiritual acts of mercy and evangelization grew exponentially in Mexico and beyond.

## For LITTLES



**Invite little children to say a thank you prayer of gratitude to God and then ask God how then can help Him bring faith and joy to others.**

Young children can embrace the spiritual works of mercy through age-appropriate activities like making prayer jars, creating comfort cards for the sorrowful, and demonstrating patience in family games. Activities can also include discussing the hope of heaven to encourage someone with doubts, learning faith facts to instruct the ignorant, and modeling kindness to admonish someone to turn away from sin.

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## For MIDDLES and Teens



Try a one week ***Spiritual Works of Mercy Family Challenge***:

The Spiritual Works of Mercy can be hard for young people to imagine and act on. Try this one week challenge to think, talk and act with these Works of Mercy in mind. Each day family members can earn a point for living out a different Spiritual Work Of Mercy in the home or elsewhere. Talk at dinner or before bed about who got points that day. At the end of the week the person who tallied up the most points gets to decide something fun for the family to do together. Examples: (one Work of Mercy each day)

1. **Counseling the Doubtful:** Talk about the hope of heaven at the dinner table. Brainstorm ways to share that hope with others who doubt.
2. **Instructing the Ignorant:** Memorize a verse from the Catechism. Learn something new about the Catholic faith and share it with a friend.
3. **Admonishing the Sinner:** Practice ways to come alongside a friend who is tempted to do (or has done) the wrong thing, and gently encourage them to do the right thing.
4. **Comforting the Sorrowful:** Make a treat for a lonely person in your neighborhood; make a meal for a grieving family in your community and deliver it with the kids.
5. **Forgiving Injuries:** Be quick to forgive siblings. Talk about ways you can show someone you've forgiven them when wronged.
6. **Bearing Wrongs Patiently:** Go a whole day without speaking negatively of anyone, including yourself.
7. **Pray for the Living and the Dead:** Pray for people in places like: prisons, hospitals, and purgatory.





# 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 .

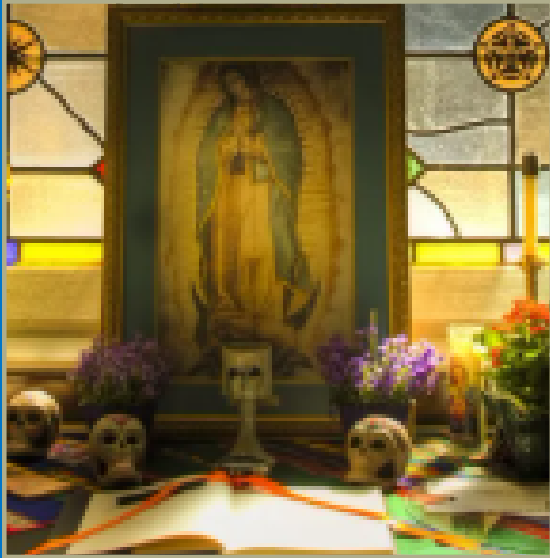
Amen.

*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



# 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.

## Jornadas

Jovenes De M.J.V.C. Jornadas

<https://www.facebook.com/MJVC.STL.Teotokos>

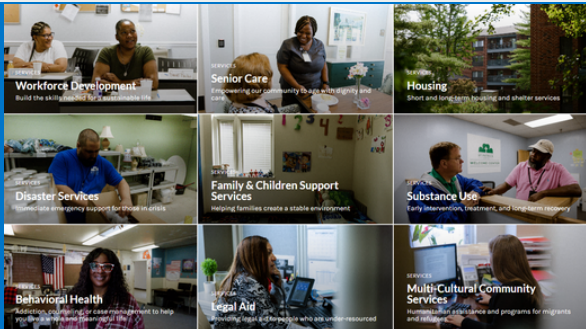
Escuela Theotokos En St. Louis

Te invitamos a que seas parte de nuestra pastoral juvenil.

Jornadas STL está aquí para acompañarte en tu camino de fe.

“Todo a Jesús por María, Todo a María para Jesús”

Coordinator: Jaybe Mata Asesor: Gris Jimenez Asesor: Gerardo Arjona



## Caridades Catolicas

Se anima a las parejas y familias que necesiten ayuda para comenzar el nuevo año a contactar con Catholic Charities en St. Louis. Ofrecen una amplia gama de servicios para ayudar de muchas maneras.

<https://ccstl.org/services/all>

## Que Brille El Amor

Recursos Gratuitos en Español del Consejo de Obispos de California:

ENLACE: Excelentes ideas e inspiración para parejas y familias hispanas.

[Que Brille El Amor](#)



# 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
<b>Paul Duker</b> <i>Manager - Office of Marriage &amp; Family Life</i>	314-792-7178	paulduker@archstl.org
<b>Cathy Gilmore</b> <i>Jubilant Marriages Coordinator</i>	636-391-3999	cathygilmore@archstl.org
<b>Sr. Maureen Martin, ACSJ</b> <i>Family Life</i>	314-792-7612	srmaureenmartin@archstl.org
<b>Amy Buehrle</b> <i>Pastoral Associate - Northern Vicariate</i>	314-792-6512	amybuehrle@archstl.org
<b>Tammy Chumley</b> <i>Pastoral Associate - Western Vicariate</i>	314-792-6456	TammyChumley@archstl.org
<b>Jennifer Meehan</b> <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](https://ARCHSTL.org/Jubilant-Marriages) to discover more!