



The Joy of Love

*There have been many commentaries on Pope Francis' Encyclical **Amoris Laetitia** since its release in April 2016. On this weekend dedicated to Marriage Enrichment, we feature an opinion on the Pope's letter by Archbishop Mark Coleridge, of Brisbane, Australia. This was first published in *The Weekend Australian*, on April 9th 2016.*

From the moment of his election Francis has been a Pope of surprises. One of the surprises of this old man has been his energy. It has been astonishing, and part of the energy has been literary — as we see in his latest production, *The Joy of Love: On Love in the Family*. In it, the Pope wants to gather up and move forward the work of the Synod of Bishops held in Rome in 2014 and last year. The decision to hold the two synods on the theme of marriage and the family was a surprise. But it was shrewd strategy from a Pope who is nothing if not a strategist.

What Francis was saying to the Catholic Church was that a synod wasn't just a one-off event; it's an ongoing journey, which is what the word synod means. In *The Joy of Love* Francis doesn't claim to be the final word settling every controversial question. Nor does he claim to offer a comprehensive pastoral plan to be implemented around the planet. His claims are more modest, and for that reason more compelling. He wants this text to be another step on the way; not a final product but another part of the process. Modest Francis may be, but this is an ambitious offering. That sort of tension undergirds all he writes here. The *Joy of Love* is high-visioned but also homespun. He offers the grand and ageless poetry of the church's vision of marriage and the family, which has the deepest roots in the biblical tradition.

Francis is not afraid to name the dark side of marriage and the family as it appears in the very different cultures of the world. At times he seems to rub our noses in the facts of marriage and the family, even when the facts are unpleasant. Yet out of the mess he always seems able to make the title of his text, *The Joy of Love*, seem more than vapid dreaming or whistling in the dark in a world where joy and love can seem a mirage. He opens up a huge vision of possibility for marriage and the family when that vision seems to be shrinking. So often so little seems possible; yet here is Pope Francis speaking of a hope for marriage and the family that reaches beyond all the seeming hopelessness.

Of course he says the church must speak the truth. But that isn't enough. If that's all we do, then we run the risk of turning the great truths of Christianity into stones that we hurl at those we want to condemn. We also need to walk with people, all kinds of people, especially those who are struggling in their marriage or family life. It's what Christianity has to offer in an often merciless world.

To walk with people, whoever they are, means to enter into dialogue with them. That means we listen to people, whoever they may be and however far they may fall short of the ideal. For Francis, the ideal does matter; the vision must be kept clearly focused. But if we speak only of it, then we can drift off into some abstract no-osphere that doesn't breathe the air of reality.

Continued on page 2

The Joy of Love

Continued from page 1

Amoris Laetitia insists we have to deal always with the facts, however messy they may be; we have to be in touch with the reality of marriage and the family.

Among the facts is that marriage is the sexual sacrament, and Francis doesn't at all shy away from speaking of sexuality. At last year's synod the talk about sexuality at times seemed somewhat disembodied and abstract; not surprising, perhaps, given that most at the synod were celibate. But there's nothing disembodied or abstract here about what Francis writes of sexuality in marriage and the family. He speaks openly of passion and the emotions, but also of education in human sexuality for the young.

The language Francis uses is crucial; and *The Joy of Love* is certainly a call to change the way the Church speaks about marriage and the family. In part this is because most people these days don't understand the language we use; nor do they share our assumptions. There is a crisis of communication. We're in search of new words and images, and Francis is a serious help in that. He speaks in a way we haven't heard from a Pope for a long time, perhaps ever.

The Pope's idiom isn't static but dynamic. Marriage is not a state but a journey. The ideal is the point of arrival, but the real is one of the many points on the way. The community of the church has to journey with people, humbly and humanly, before they're married, when they're preparing for marriage, in the early years of married life and all the way until death brings the journey to an end. That journeying means listening to the truth people speak, even in the midst of the mess, but also offering them — tenderly (one of Francis' favourite words) — the hope that much more is possible.

Accompanying people on the way also means discerning with them the truth of their journey and even the movement of God in their life — because the real God moves also in the mess. God is not only the point of arrival, awaiting the successful at journey's end. God is also, says Francis, our companion on the way, with all our failures; and people need to be helped to discover that truth.

Popes traditionally have spoken as "we" rather than "I" and with good reason, because Popes gather up the wisdom not only of ages but of a vast worldwide community. In that sense, the Pope — even a distinctively voiced Pope such as Francis — always speaks in the first-person plural. In *The Joy of Love* we have not only the words of an extraordinary human being and pastor but also a wisdom that is deep and wide when we're not always wise, not always joyful and loving, in addressing the many complex questions concerning marriage and the family. What Francis offers here is not just for the church; it's for the world.

Access the text of Amoris Laetitia on the Vatican Website: w2.vatican.va (click on Apostolic Exhortations)

AARP Tax-Aide

Free tax counseling and preparation for taxpayers with moderate and low income is available from AARP Tax-Aide from February 4th through April 12th. You do not need to be a member of AARP or a retiree to use this service.

Call the toll-free number: 888-227-7669 or visit www.aarp.org/taxaide to locate an AARP Tax-Aide site near you.

Here is a list of items to bring to an appointment:

- Driver's License and Social Security Card, Social Security cards for all dependents.
- Last year's 2017 Federal & State returns.
- 2018 tax documents: W-2's, Social Security, 1099-R Pensions, IRA, annuities.
- 1099's interest, dividend, miscellaneous, unemployment, sale of stocks – including purchase price, date purchased, and date sold.
- Property taxes – 2018 summer and winter statements with property taxable value.
- Home heating costs for 2018 listed on your Nov., Dec., or Jan. bill.
- Affordable Health Care statement 1095-A (will be issued at the end of January).
- Itemized Returns: receipts and totals for medical, charities, paid 2018 property taxes, etc.
- Cancelled or voided check for direct deposit.

Youth Choir Festival

The Archdiocesan Academy of Sacred Music invites youth choirs, grades 3-8, to participate in the annual Youth Choral Festival on March 25th, at the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament in Detroit.

Please visit aod.org/music for logistics and registration deadlines. Participating choirs are expected to arrive having prepared the required repertoire – most of which can be downloaded.

The day of musical and spiritual enrichment, led by Susan Lindquist and Joseph Balistreri, will culminate with the Solemnity Mass at 2:00 p.m.

Gal-entine's Day

Ste. Anne is the Patron Saint of Unmarried Women, and February 14th is Valentine's Day, so we think there's no better day for a special event for you and your gal pals.

You're invited to Ste. Anne's parish for a special evening retreat with fancy catering, wine, and desserts, as Naomi Vrazo and Colleen Pressprich get real about their faith, as women who have known pain but have also known redemption.

There will be time to talk and share and pray with each other, including a celebration of Mass that night, just for our group. To register visit ste-anne.org/events/gal-entines-day/ or call 313-496-1701.

Ste. Anne de Detroit Parish was founded in 1701 and is the second oldest continuously operating parish in America. Ste. Anne is located at 1000 Sainte Anne Street in Detroit near the Ambassador Bridge.

All Things Considered

The origin of all love, from the beginning, and the source of all love we know now, is our Lord, Jesus Christ.

On Valentine's Day, pray that you will always have your heart fixed on the Lord – that the love Christ showed for you will be manifested in your desire to serve those who need you.



Two weeks ago, Archbishop Vigneron asked all the priests in the Archdiocese to meet with him to discuss the next phase of the movement to Unleash the Gospel. You can watch a full video of the gathering and hear the Archbishop and **Fr. Steve Pullis**, the Director of Evangelization and Catechesis for the Archdiocese, explain it at <https://goo.gl/pWWXRw>.

The next step in the Archbishop's vision to change the culture of our Archdiocese will be a parish-by-parish effort to respond to his pastoral letter's call that "every activity and resource of the parish must be in alignment with the fundamental commitment to evangelization." To accomplish this, each parish is being asked to develop a Missionary Strategic Plan (MSP).

In a surprise announcement which came last week, the Archbishop is re-assigning **Msgr. Patrick Halfpenny** away from his duties at St. Paul's on the Lake to become the director for Priestly Ministry effective July 1st. In this new position, Msgr. Halfpenny will assist priests to become better equipped for mission as they seek to implement the directives in Archbishop Vigneron's Unleash the Gospel letter and the recommendations of Synod '16. The very fact that the Archbishop is reassigning a seasoned pastor like Msgr. Pat to do this work full time is evidence of the seriousness that he has in accomplishing this goal.

While the full details of the MSP process will be coming this April, the Archbishop said that he wants it to look something like Synod '16. This means that it will be rooted in prayer. He also feels it essential that the parish re-explore the methods and goals of the Unleash the Gospel process.

To this end, a Parish Leadership Team, which will include non-staff parishioners as well as staff, will play a crucial role. Just as Synod '16 took into account the voices of the faithful, so too the Missionary Strategic Plan process will require an opportunity for prayerful input from all in the parish. Finally, the entire process needs to produce a concrete, action plan.

Since the MSP needs to be structured around the Synod, what emerges as goals needs to be related to the family and to the parish.

These propositions will be the backbone of each parish's plan to ensure that it will be faithful to the work of the Holy Spirit as it was expressed through Synod '16 and Unleash the Gospel. You may read both of these documents online at aod.org.

The Archbishop was clear in addressing his priests that because Catholic schools are an apostolate of all the faithful and of the whole Archdiocese, each parish's MSP will need to incorporate how it will support Catholic education. The direction this seems to be taking is some parochial school tax imposed on every parish. [Note that we here at St. Ambrose already pay an extra 15% tax on our charter school rental income. I do not know if the new school support system will be in addition to, or a replacement of that.]

Money follows mission. New financial resources will obviously be needed to accomplish these various initiatives designed by parishes. And to fund those plans, parishes will partici-

pate in an Archdiocesan-wide capital campaign. According to preliminary information, that will result in no less than a 50-50 split of the funds garnered between the parish and the Archdiocese. Some priests suggested that the ratio should be weighted a little more in favor of the parishes. Archbishop Vi-

gneron was clear that against his financial advisors's advice, fund raising would come at the conclusion of the spiritual-pastoral planning process, rather than at its opening. Professional consultation services have already been retained by the Archdiocese and the costs of the preliminary work have already been picked up by a single donor.

So that no parish will have to go through this process unguided, the Archbishop committed the Central Services departments of the Archdiocese to help. They will draw upon other local and national apostolates who can assist. As more details come into focus, there will be a menu of options by which a parish can be accompanied through the process. It is anticipated that all of this will begin with around 10 parishes late this Spring, with another cohort in the fall and the remainder of parishes in the year 2020 and 2021.

Here at St. Ambrose, our parish Pastoral Council will resume discussions about these matters this week Wednesday at our session scheduled in the ARK to begin at 7:00 p.m. If you want to get in on the ground-floor planning of this endeavor, know that you are free to come to this meeting. We'll place this item at the beginning of the agenda. Central to this discussion is where in the calendar we would like to situate our efforts – early or later in the process. Your prayers are invited that the Holy Spirit continue to guide this parish and the Catholic Church here in Southeastern Michigan.

TRP



Faith Formation Station



Name

Home Phone

Work Phone

Email Address

- I would simply like to learn more about the Catholic Faith.
- I desire to prepare for my Baptism into Christianity.
- I've been Baptized as a Christian and now desire to join in Catholic Communion.
- I'm non-Catholic, but married to a Catholic, and now wish to join the Catholic Church.
- I'm Catholic and I would like to complete my initiation into the Catholic Church by celebrating Confirmation and/or Communion.
- I'm Baptized Catholic and would like to learn more about my faith and how to practice it.
- I want to propose someone for Catholic Church membership and offer to serve as their sponsor.
- I would be willing to help with an R.C.I.A. program.
- I have other needs, requests, and questions. Please contact me.

Return this to the Parish Rectory or place it in the Collection basket.

This week the parents of our faith formation students preparing for First Holy Communion gathered to pray together and to learn more about the Eucharist and the ways in which they can best help their children prepare to receive Christ for the first time. Trying to decide what to present at this important meeting is difficult, because so much of our Catholic identity lies in the Eucharist. Our opening prayer led us through a guided meditation in which we all met Jesus who broke bread with us and reminded us that no matter where we go he will always be there with us in the Eucharist. In addition to an overview of the sacrament, we discussed how our families are the domestic church and the importance of the sacredness of the ordinary. We concluded our meeting together with a shared prayer for unconditional love and guidance.

This year, the students spend a lot of time learning about both Reconciliation and the Eucharist. Guided by their faithful catechists Victoria Hugh, Melissa Keagle, and Kim Truza, they will come to know about the sacramental origins in the Scriptures. They will come to understand what it means when we say that Jesus Christ is “substantially” present in the Eucharist. They will come to understand how the Mass prepares us to receive this gift of love. They will come to understand the consequences of this love in their family, their community, and their friendships. We are preparing the students to preach the Good News that God is love, that God’s love dwells among us, that God’s love calls us to become this love for one another.

Last Sunday February 3rd these students preparing for their First Eucharist were called by name to willingly stand before the parish congregation and profess their desire to prepare for and to receive the Eucharist. The students also received a special blessing from Fr. Tim. This liturgy recognized the students’ sacramental preparation by including that ritual at a parish Mass so that the children might become comfortable coming up in front of the community. Such a ritualization helps children see the altar as the family table that we are all called to gather around. In a very concrete way, they can see the link between worship and formation in faith. Preparing to receive First Communion is about so much more than classes or books.

On the day that their parents had them baptized, they took the first step to having their child initiated into the Body of Christ – the universal Church. The Sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation complete that initiation into the Body of Christ. Nowhere is the fullness of the Body of Christ more evident than in the celebration of Sunday Mass as a parish community. A child’s First Communion is another step toward completing that full initiation into the life of the faith community. Thus, it is a parish celebration. In fact, all Sacraments are celebrations of the whole parish. The parish is welcoming these young people to the Table of the Lord. On the day of their First Eucharist (Holy Thursday Liturgy April 18, 2019) these children will be welcomed to join the St. Ambrose parish community – and the universal Church – at the Lord’s Table.

As First Communion is a parish celebration, we invite the parish to pray for all of the children who are preparing to receive the Eucharist. Special bookmarks are in the back of church for anyone willing to take one home as a reminder to pray for one of our program’s students. Through the wonder and awe of these students, our entire parish will learn again what it means to taste and see the goodness of the Lord dwelling among us. If we open our eyes to witness them in their preparation, we, too, can be converted, evangelized, and transformed. These children are gifts to their families, to our parish, to the entire Church, to the whole world.

May God continue to bless the sacramental journey of our first communicants: Andrew Adlhoch, Freya Austin, Olivia Boggs, Therese Carron, Adelyn Christian, Cala Coyro, Luna Coyro, Gianna Decker, Oscar Dritsan, Nathan Grech, Adler Hanneman, Cecily Hartung, Louisa Justin, Sam Krupp, Julia Kuhl, Evelyn McLean, Jacob Mitchell, Bebe Noecker, Lillian Novack, Estella Raether, Ben Ryan, Pablo San Miguel – Gil, Lucan Tague, Piper Truza, Daniel Utley, Emily Vassel, Anna Lia Weidenbach, and Liam Weidenbach.

Kelly Anne Woolums

Journey of Hope

The journey of hope is an open door for us to fully understand the value of the true meaning of evangelization and mercy. In our journey of hope, evangelization and mercy reveal the authenticity of togetherness as community in God's kingdom. Evangelization is the driving force that stimulates the life of our faith toward building of the kingdom of God on earth by sharing the compassionate love of God. Evangelization expresses the action of mercy, which discloses God's kind-hearted gift of hope. We are involved in evangelization and mercy revealed in St. Paul's teaching to us that, "hope does not disappoint" (Rom 5:5). Evangelization embodies the mercy of God in its mission.

Before any active mission of evangelization, there must be an individual personal encounter with Christ, like the woman at the well in John's gospel. "The woman left her water jar and went into the town and said to the people, 'Come see a man who told me everything I have done'" (John 4:28-30). Obviously, it is necessary to encounter and embrace this lovely gift. The reason is that you share what you have since one cannot give something out of an empty vacuum. We are invited to experience this great compassionate gift of mercy for ourselves. Evangelization and mercy help us to be authentic witnesses to the good news of hope, reconciliation, peaceable solidarity and love.

Evangelization and mercy disclose a tangible practice of liberation to encourage the dignity of humanity in Christ. Luke's gospel highlights a merciful characteristic of liberation as a powerful asset of evangelization. Jesus was led by the Spirit to proclaim and advocate for the marginalized, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. . . . Proclaim liberty to captives... recovery of sight to the blind... let the oppressed go free..." (Lk 4:18). This is an evangelical act of mercy because it unveils God's compassionate love of humanity and all creation. Therefore, an individual is invited first to accept conversion and be genuinely transformed. We are called to "lean" toward our Savior — "Ultimate Giver", our First Evangelizer. Jesus is our affectionate, merciful and compassionate loving God. Hence, when evangelization intertwines with mercy, a tangible network sets in motion a dynamic process that embraces reconciliation and collective progress.

In Matthew's and Mark's gospels, Christ continues his evangelization and mercy ministry of reconciliation even from the cross, to his resurrection, and after. Christ's encouragement to his apostles to "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age" (Mk 16:15; Mt 28:19-20). Certainly, this passage reveals an essential courage to engage in this inspiring ministry of evangelization and mercy.

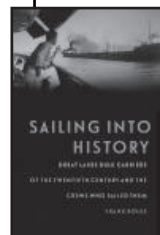
John's point of view is about the promotion of human life and the essential dignity of love, whether this is physiological, emotional, psychological, social or spiritual. John tells us that "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life" (John 3:16). Indeed love is the name of God! He cares for all life because God is love (1Jn 4:8). Therefore, in our faithful journey of hope, love is the ultimate aim of evangelization and mercy for the expansion of God's Kingdom.

Dn. Anthony Kote-Witah, OFM Cap.

Tap into Life

Join us every 3rd Sunday of the month for the Solanus Casey Center's Young Adult (Age 18-35) Ministry event, Tap into Life, a Franciscan Approach to Theology on Tap. Fellowship begins at 6 p.m. and the evening's talk and discussions begin at 7 p.m. Please spread the word and bring a friend! To RSVP, email TapIntoLife@thecapuchins.org. The next Tap Into Life will be next Sunday, February 17th. The Solanus Casey Center is located at 1780 Mount Elliott in Detroit.

Marcellina's Book Club



The Great Lakes create a vast transportation network that supports a massive shipping industry. In Sailing into History: Great Lakes Bulk Carriers of the Twentieth Century and the Crews Who Sailed Them, Frank Boles

relates seamanship, cargo, competition, cooperation, technology, engineering, business, unions, government decisions, and international agreements in a story of unrivaled interest.

We are in the process of connecting with the author to see when he can pay our book club a visit. That date will be announced here. In the meantime, pick up a copy of the book and get a headstart in reading this important work which was one of this year's twenty Notable Book Honorees by the State Library of Michigan.

The Beehive

is the parish weekly bulletin of the St. Ambrose Catholic Community Detroit/Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan

Pastor: Rev. Timothy R. Pelc

Assistant: Dn. Anthony Kote-Witah, OFM, Cap

Pastoral Minister: Charles Dropiewski

Religious Education: Kelly Anne Woolons

Minister of Music: Dr. Norah Duncan IV

Office Manager: Peggy O'Connor

Sacramental Celebrations

Masses: On the Lord's Day –

Saturday Vigil - 4:00 p.m.

Sunday - 8:30 and 11:15 a.m.

Baptism: Arrangements for both adults and infants to be made by contacting the rectory.

Penance: As announced and by appointment.

Marriage: Couples should contact the rectory office a minimum of six months in advance of the proposed date to make arrangements.

Funeral: Normally celebrated within one week after the deceased's passing.

Directory

Parish Office: 15020 Hampton

Grosse Pointe Park, Michigan 48230

Tel: (313) 822-2814 **Fax:** (313) 822-9838

Email address: stambrose@comcast.net

Religious Education: (313) 332-5633

Pastoral Ministry: (313) 332-5631

Ark Scheduling: (313) 822-2814

Parish Website: stambrosechurch.net

Liturgy Schedule for the Coming Week

Monday, February 11

8:30 a.m. - Morning prayer

Tuesday, February 12

8:30 a.m. - Mass - Bernice Pickard

Wednesday, February 13

8:30 a.m. - Morning prayer

Thursday, February 14

St. Cyril, monk &

St. Methodius, bishop

8:30 a.m. - Mass - Bob Ramsey,
Loretta Gilewicz

Friday, February 15

8:30 a.m. - Mass - Ed Ploe

Saturday, February 16

4:00 p.m. - For All People

Sunday, February 17

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

8:30 a.m. - For All People

11:15 a.m. - For All People



Scriptures for the 5th Week in Ordinary Time

Monday, February 11

- Gn 1:1-19
- Ps 104: 1-2a, 5-6, 10, 12, 24, 35c
- Mk 6: 53-56

Tuesday, February 12

- Gn 1: 20-2:4a
- Ps 8: 4-9
- Mk 7: 1-13

Wednesday, February 13

- Gn 2: 4b-9, 15-17
- Ps 104: 1-2a, 27-30
- Mk 7:14-23

Thursday, February 14

- Gn 2: 18-25
- Ps 128: 1-5
- Mk 7: 24-30

Friday, February 15

- Gn 3: 1-8
- Ps 32: 1-2, 5-7
- Mk 7: 31-37

Saturday, February 16

- Gn 3: 9-24
- Ps 90: 2-6, 12-13
- Mk 8: 1-10

Sunday, February 17

- Jer 17: 5-8
- 1 Cor 15: 12, 16-20
- Lk 6: 17-26

The Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 16th and February 17th

4:00 p.m. - **Celebrant:** Fr. Pelc **Lector:** Cathy McPherson
Eucharistic Ministers: Maria Cox- & Adam Borkowski, Elizabeth Puleo-Tague
Altar Servers: Julianna & Kiernan Tague

8:30 a.m. - **Sunday - Celebrant:** Fr. Pelc **Lector:** Karlos Haynes
Eucharistic Ministers: Colleen Gatzke, Christopher Harrison, Joan Jackson, Maggie Jackson, Colleen Jogan, Bob Jogan, Steve Linne
Altar Servers: Nicholas Kurta, Alyssa Flores

11:15 a.m. - **Celebrant:** Fr. Bede **Lector:** Leslie Leitch
Eucharistic Ministers: Beverly Bennert, Michele Hodges, Joseph Hugh, Pat Mocerri, Darryl Swiatkowski, Patty Yaden
Altar Servers: Malvina Lubanski, April Caballero

Your Envelope Speaks . . . the Inside Story

To operate, each week our parish requires a *minimum* of..... \$10,100.00

On Sunday, February 3, 2019

in envelopes we received \$7,036.00

in the loose collection \$604.00

in other donations..... \$1,390.00

for a total of..... **\$9,030.00**

Under budget for the week..... **\$1,070.00**

Number of envelopes mailed 900

Number of envelopes used..... 138

"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?' 'Here I am, 'I said, 'send me!'" (Isaiah 6:8)

Every day, in little ways and in big ways, God asks, "Whom shall I send?" Whether it is someone to take on a new ministry, to give a friendly smile to a stranger or say a word of encouragement to a friend, God constantly provides opportunities to help someone in need. The next time you hear God calling, have the courage to walk through the door and say "Here I am, Lord."

Our Sick

Please pray for those who are seriously ill or who are hospitalized: Pat Blake, Karen Culver, Ann Sullivan Kay, Donald Miriani, Bonnie McKenna, Jeanne Noto, David Schumacker, Matthew Elias, George Bucec, Emilie Kasper, Arthur Stoyshin, Anna Noto Billings, Vilma Rivers, Vilma Marone, Eileen O'Brien, Martha Luna, Dina Engels, Liz Linne, Donna Barnes, Betty Greenia, Alexandra Cullen, Charmaine Kaptur, Darby O'Toole, Frank Gregory, Josephine DeCastris, Alex Billiu, Albina Checki, Gladys Bogos, Lou Rondini, Wayne Wallrich and Luca Perrotta.

Christian Financial

St. Ambrose Parish, through Christian Financial Credit Union, is equipped to make electronic transfers from your checking account or credit card on our website. Your checking account or credit card may be used to make a single donation; or you may set up automatic weekly, monthly or quarterly contributions on a schedule. Go to stambrosechurch.net for information on electronic giving.

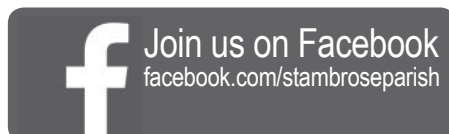
Discernment Weekend

Discernment Weekends are a unique experience for anyone sensing a call to the priesthood. Spending four days living at the seminary provides you with a first-hand opportunity to see what it's like from the inside.

Attending a Discernment Weekend is perfect for anyone from the Archdiocese of Detroit (Single men, high school senior to 55 years old) who is discerning a vocation to the priesthood. These weekends provide you with more tools for proper discernment.

Typically, 10-20 people attend each Discernment Weekend. The next discernment weekend is on March 21-25. Register at detroitpriest.com/programs/discernment-weekend. Also, at that site you can click to see a sample schedule. This will give you a better understanding of what occurs on the Discernment Weekend.

Once you register, the Director of Priestly Vocations will contact you to discuss the Weekend and answer any questions.





What is the History of Marriage? By Kathleen Manning

Jesus lived and preached in a world that saw marriage primarily as an economic contract. Today, we believe it to be a Sacrament.

Before the obligatory “Ave Maria” sung at the ceremony and a crazy aunt leading “The Chicken Dance” at the reception, guests at a Catholic wedding witness “a covenant by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life and which is ordered by its nature to the good of the spouses and the procreation of children.” But this was not always the case. For more than a thousand years of church history, this idea of marriage faced plenty of healthy competition.

Jesus lived and preached in a world that saw marriage primarily as an economic contract. Jews considered marriage a commandment, but one intended to benefit the wider community by ensuring stability and economic prosperity.

Proverbs 31, today proclaimed at weddings as a poetic tribute to wifely virtue, would have sounded to its original audience like a job description. Can she oversee slaves? Does she understand viticulture? Can she spin both wool and flax? Not only were these skills worth more than rubies, they were far more practical.

By contrast, early Christian communities promoted celibacy and often scorned marriage, since marrying and establishing a household distracted people from preparing for the kingdom of God. Still, limiting the community to only celibate followers had some obvious drawbacks. Instead, early Christians outlawed divorce, polygamy, and incest.

Attempting to find a role for marriage that did not conflict with their communitarian ideals, some early Christian writers suggested that marriage “has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament” because Jesus performed his first public miracle at a wedding.

The fifth-century Council of Florence declared, “The seventh sacrament is marriage, which is a figure of the union of Christ and the church.” This declaration, however, was issued to clarify the relationship between Christ and the church. Thanks to its societal ubiquity, marriage was a handy metaphor.

As the church grew, it struggled to accommodate the marriage practices of its swelling ranks of converts. Clovis, the first Christian king of France, praised by church chroniclers for his piety and wisdom, never abandoned polygamy.

A ban on clerical polygamy was enacted only in the eighth century. Byzantine emperors routinely asked the church to invalidate the marriages of powerful rivals, and jilted parties were forced to receive another sacrament, holy orders.

During the 16th century Protestants considered the church’s evidence for sacramental marriage flimsy. Christ’s miracle was turning water into wine; he just happened to do it at a wedding. It was this challenge that forced the church to clarify its understanding of marriage.

Fifteen hundred years after Cana, during the seventh session of the Council of Trent in 1547, sacramental marriage became part of canon law. Centuries of local tradition, political interference, and conflicting religious opinions over what constituted a valid marriage faded as this critical change finally enabled the church to rule more consistently and effectively on marriage questions.

This article appeared in the November 2012 issue of U.S. Catholic (Vol. 77, No. 11, page 46).

Marriage Coaching

The Marriage Coaching program is a couple-to-couple mentoring program designed to assist couples to live out God’s plan for their marriage.

Trained Coaching Couples provide support and practical skills to help couples restore and realize the fullness that is intended for their marriage. The Marriage Coaching program consists of seven main coaching sessions and is strictly confidential and at no cost.

Contact: (313) 237-4680, go to aod.org/marriagecoaching or email familyministry@aod.org.

Tax Strategies

Parishioners of St. Ambrose may soon be sitting down to calculate their Federal taxes for 2018. It may do you some good to consider these two ways to lower your tax bill.

The first is through a gift of **Appreciated Securities**. This would include a tax deduction and avoidance of tax on capital gains if the donor sells highly appreciated securities. Through a gift of appreciated securities to St. Ambrose Parish, donors may receive an income tax deduction up to the full market value of the securities and can also avoid capital gains tax. You save twice – on income tax and capital gains tax.

The second is through an **IRA Rollover – Qualified Charitable Distribution**. A QCD provides a way for donors 70½ and older to receive a tax benefit because the QCD will not be included in adjusted gross income and is therefore not subject to tax. This is now more beneficial in view of the increased standard deduction under the new tax law. A donor can make a QCD of up to \$100,000 annually to a charity, and as an added benefit, the QCD satisfies the donor’s required minimum distribution. Consult with your tax preparer or an accountant as to the details of making such arrangements. We can help direct you to qualified and reputable individuals should you need such direction.