Reflection for Married Couples

We invite you both to take a moment to reflect upon your vocation together. Please set aside some time, choose a peaceful place, and consider lighting a candle as you go through this reflection exercise together.

Say Together: The Sign of the Cross

Say Together:

Almighty and eternal God,
You blessed the union of husband and wife
So that we might reflect the union of Christ with his Church:
look with kindness on us.
Renew our marriage covenant.
Increase your love in us and strengthen our bond of peace
so that we may always rejoice in the gift of your blessing.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Read:

"Christ is the source of this grace. 'Just as of old God encountered his people with a covenant of love and fidelity, so our Savior, the spouse of the Church, now encounters Christian spouses through the sacrament of Matrimony.' Christ dwells with them, gives them the strength to take up their crosses and so follow him, to rise again after they have fallen, to forgive one another, to bear one another's burdens, to 'be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ,' and to love one another with supernatural, tender, and fruitful love. In the joys of their love and family life he gives them here on earth a foretaste of the wedding feast of the Lamb:

> How can I ever express the happiness of a marriage joined by the Church, strengthened by an offering, sealed by a blessing, announced by angels, and ratified by the Father? . . . How wonderful the bond between two believers, now one in hope, one in desire, one in discipline, one in the same service! They are both children of one Father and servants of the same Master, undivided in spirit and flesh, truly two in one flesh. Where the flesh is one, one also is the spirit."

-Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 1642

(*over*)

Discuss together (feel free to discuss all of these questions or to choose just those that resonate most with the two of you):

1. In what specific ways have we invited God's love to dwell in our marriage?

2. In what specific ways have we responded as a couple to our vocational call to serve God, each other, our children, our faith community, our civic community and the world?

3. In what ways do we encourage each other (and our children, if applicable) to practice our faith and to be active members of our faith community?

4. In what specific ways is our marriage a mutual blending of our lives? In what ways do we strive to share our minds and hearts completely?

5. What are some things we do to provide mutual fulfillment (strive to make each other happy)?

6. In what ways do we try to maximize one another's potential to grow?

7. How well do we recognize and affirm each other's gifts and talents?

8. In what ways does our marriage exhibit the signs of gentleness, kindness, patience and understanding to others?

9. In what ways have we needed to adjust to changing circumstances and pressures which we've experienced in our life together?

10. In which situation(s) have I needed to forgive my spouse? In which situation(s) have I needed to forgive myself for causing harm to our marriage?

11. In which ways is our marriage based on mutuality, sharing, selflessness and sacrifice?

12. As a couple, can we imagine some of the ways in which the people who know us see the love that Christ has for the Church reflected in our relationship?

Read:

"In restoring to marriage its original meaning and beauty, Jesus proclaims what the Creator meant marriage to be "in the beginning." He does so because marriage will be made into the visible embodiment of his love for the Church. In his espousal of the Church as his Bride, he fulfills and elevates marriage. He reveals his own love to the end (Jn 13:1) as the purest and deepest love, the perfection of all love. In doing this he reveals the deepest meaning of all marital love: self-giving love modeled on God's inner life and love."

- USCCB, Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan (Washington, DC, USCCB, 2009) p. 33

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