



DIOCESE OF SCRANTON

# ROOTED IN CHRIST

LENT 2022



## STICK WITH IT *Saturday*

*In our lives we will experience seasons of consolation and desolation, good times and bad. When we are **Rooted in Christ**, the liturgical seasons of Lent and Easter can help us to understand and align those seasons of our lives with Christ's death and resurrection.*

*The Lenten reflections for "Stick with it Saturday" remind us that it can be challenging to persevere through tough times, but that when we do, great consolation and beautiful fruit will follow. Below is just such a reminder.*

They met at a carnival in West Side when they were fifteen and sixteen years old. His best friend, Billy, introduced them.

In 1965 they married at St. Pat's; they were seventeen and eighteen. There are no wedding photos, there was no white dress, and there were no flowers. She was eight months pregnant with their first daughter.

They had three healthy children by 1969, all surprises. Money was tight, and he became a plumbing apprentice. She got her GED.



Fulfilling their childhood dreams of being a cowboy and a cowgirl, they bought a modest home and moved their young family to a small farm. With a lot of trial and error, and with a lot of laughter, they figured things out as the years progressed.

He struggled with alcoholism. She and the rest of the family struggled along with him; alcoholism is a family disease.

They moved once more, to their dream home with a big wraparound porch. There was a lot of arguing and yelling; there were many gatherings of family and friends overflowing with love and fun.

The family flourished. He joined the volunteer firefighters, she worked in the dress factory. The family became pillars in their civic, school, and faith communities. He and she grew apart.

Their children threw them a surprise Wedding Anniversary bash. They celebrated with family and beloved friends in the way they had missed when they married twenty-five years before.

*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me. Then the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:8-9*

He was now a plumbing foreman, and a very good one. Each time one of the jobs he'd worked on neared completion, the family worried. Each time he was hired for a new job immediately; he never missed a day.

The children left home and married, grandchildren were born. All still gathered regularly around the Sunday dinner table for pasta and sauce.

He became vice-president of his company. She worked in the Art Department at Marywood University and took some classes.

His alcoholism continued, and his body began to suffer from the effects. In desperation she gave an ultimatum; he began his sobriety journey.

A new chapter for the entire family began, sustained with grace, with perseverance, and with the support of many. Great grandchildren were born.

He retired. They marked fifty years of marriage and celebrated with a dream cruise to Alaska.



He was diagnosed with an aggressive form of prostate cancer. She and their children supported him through countless appointments and treatments. He celebrated eight years of sobriety.

In 2019 the entire family spent Christmas at the family homestead. They shared stories and laughter; they shared tears.

Family and dear friends gathered over days spent in the hospice unit. He and she renewed their marriage commitment.

February 22, 2020 he died. Their fifty-three year journey together, full of both laughter and tears, ended.

*Two people with the cards stacked against them - through the grace of God, **Rooted in Christ**, and sticking with it - together they created a life filled with meaning, producing great fruit.*

I am their youngest daughter, and I will be forever grateful to God and to them for their vocation of marriage. Jim and Linda's daily modeling of patience, forgiveness, forbearance, perseverance, and love served as the greatest witness to so many, a witness to the ways in which consolation follows desolation. Two people with the cards stacked against them - through the grace of God, **Rooted in Christ**, and sticking with it - together they created a life filled with meaning, producing great fruit.



**Jennifer Hayes Housel** serves as the Director for Community & Family Development in the Office for Parish Life. Inspired by the marriages they have experienced through their parents and grandparents, Jen and her husband Bob have served in marriage ministries for most of their twenty-five years together.

To learn about marriage resources available in the Diocese of Scranton, please click [here](#).

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## **FOR REFLECTION**

**How might you better practice “sticking with it” in your family relationships this Lent?**

**Can you better practice patience and forbearance with someone in your life: a friend, a fellow parishioner, a colleague?**

**Consider asking God to help you to see where you might improve, and pray for the grace to do so.**

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