

Parish Prayer Day for Marriage and Family Life

On the 7th of each month, our parish of Newtownards & Comber prays for the 24 hours for Marriage & Family Life. This is part of a Movement of Continuous Prayer for Marriage & Family Life as other parishes and groups take on the prayer for the other days of the month. To make this prayer continuous, many people in our parish have committed themselves to a specific hour of prayer on 7th August in such a way that the whole day and night are covered.

Everyone is invited to join in this prayer, either by taking on an hour, or by including this intention in your own prayer during that day; by including it in the prayers of the Masses celebrated on that day; by inviting the schools of the parish to involve the children and young people in praying for it; by asking any prayer groups that are meeting on that day to also include a prayer for it.

*If you realize that life's purpose is
knowing, loving, and serving God
and finding happiness in God's presence,
and if you make it your goal
to know, love, and serve God,
your life will have meaning.*

*You may be single or married,
prosperous or poor,
young or old
healthy or not.*

*Whatever your circumstances,
you will find meaning and happiness
if you know, love, and serve God.*

Fr Oscar Lokefahr, C.M.

August

Proposed Theme: Vocation of the Single Person

Some Thoughts:

- We generally think about vocation in terms of priesthood and religious life – and sometimes in terms of marriage. Very seldom do we consider the vocation of the single person.
- For us as Christians there is only one vocation and this comes through Baptism. **The vocation of each of us is to be a disciple of Christ.**
- This is then expressed and lived differently because of the different circumstances of our lives.
- Some people live this vocation in marriage by living as a disciple of Christ in the relationship with one other person as a Sacrament in service of their children and the world in which they live.
- Some people live this vocation in Priesthood by living as a disciple of Christ in the fraternity of the priesthood in union with the Bishop for the service of the parishes of their Diocese and the Universal Church.
- Religious live as disciples of Christ in community with one another for the service of God's people, especially the poor and those who have no one to be advocates for them.
- Single people live as disciples of Christ in the ordinary circumstances of their lives, using their gifts to bring peace and healing and hope to those around them.

There are many expressions of the vocation of the single person.

- The newly baptised baby brings joy and hope to everyone just by being present,
- Children, especially after they have been anointed with the Sacrament of Confirmation, are called to positively contribute to the joy and well-being of their parents, family, and home so that it becomes truly the Church of the home. They also have so much to bring to their school and their parish community by using their gifts to bring joy and goodness to others.
- Young people have so much to bring to other young people in today's world by helping them to come to know the goodness of following Christ. They also have great gifts to bring hope and freshness to their parents and other people in the parish. But no one asks them!!
- And older single people have gifts that are badly needed in today's world. They are often the people who look after a sick or elderly parent or sibling. Unfortunately they can be taken for granted by the rest of the family and the care for a parent or sibling is left mostly to them.
- People living on their own are also called to be disciples of Christ by making their home a place of Christ's presence and a source of his peace

Questions:

1. All the above is important, but often just lovely theory. How could some of it be brought into practice in your parish?
2. During this month of August how could you highlight the four ways the people of the parish live this one vocation of being a disciple of Christ: single life; married couples; priest; religious?
3. Do we see people living on their own as living a vocation or as simply on their own?

Suggested actions:

1. The small coordinating group could talk to one or two single people about what it is like for them as a single in the Church and world today. This could give rise to conversations within the parish.
2. Invite one or two single people to address the parish community – possibly at the weekend Masses – about the vocation of the single person.
3. Invite young people to get involved in the parish so that they can learn to live their vocation and so learn to be proactive disciples of Christ.
4. Pray for single people during this month, especially on your monthly day of Prayer for Marriage & Family Life.

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