



MUSIC FOR THE LITURGY

Sunday, June 2, 2019
Seventh Sunday of Easter

4:00 PM
8:00 AM

Gathering: Love Divine, All Loves Excelling BB 473

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 145)

Sing a joyful song to the Lord! Let the heavens and earth rejoice! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Sprinkling Rite: *God, you have moved upon the waters, you have sung in the rush of wind and flame; and in your love, you have called us sons and daughters, make us people of the water and your name.*

Preparation Loving And Forgiving BB 665

Mass Parts Storrington Mass

Communion One Love Released BB 359
Our Blessing Cup BB 362

Recessional: The King Of Kings, Christ Jesus Reigns BB 727

10:00 AM

Gathering: Lift Up Your Hearts BB 530

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 145)

Sing a joyful song to the Lord! Alleluia! Let the heavens and earth rejoice! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Sprinkling Rite: *If we have died to ourselves in Jesus, then we shall arise to new life in Him, Alleluia, alleluia!*

Preparation You Are Mine BB 456
Seek Ye First BB 435

Mass Parts Mass of God's Promise

Communion Blest Are They BB 629
Come To The Water BB 604

Recessional: Send Us Your Spirit BB 453

✠ PARISH TITHING ✠

Our Parish needs to take in \$7,000.00 each week in order to make ends meet. Thank you for your generosity to our parish! Your weekly contribution helps ensure that the parish remains a vibrant community. Please remember to submit your weekly gift even if you will be away. We depend upon your support!

**COLLECTION AMOUNTS FOR
MAY 26, 2019
WILL APPEAR IN NEXT WEEK'S BULLETIN**

PARISH GIVING

Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish has engaged *Parish Giving* to provide parishioners with an opportunity to make your offertory and other contributions through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Parish Giving is a simple, secure, and convenient way to manage your stewardship without weekly envelopes and without worries. It allows you to select contribution amounts and special collections right from your own computer or smart phone. You can be a good steward for the Parish even when you are away from the area on a weekend. Parish Giving allows you to print out a report detailing your contributions for the year. This program is available to parishioners at no cost. Log on to the St. Luke the Evangelist Parish website at <http://stlukenh.org>, click on the Parish Giving logo, and follow the easy registration instructions.

UPCOMING SECOND & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

May 30, 2019	Ascension
June 2, 2019	Property Management
June 9, 2019	No Second Collection
June 16, 2019	Fuel

Out of respect, please remember to
silence or turn off
your cell phones during Mass.
Thank you!



Suggested Weekly Contribution Based on Income

Annual Income	5% Commitment annually/ weekly	3% Commitment annually/ weekly
\$100,000	\$5,000/\$100	\$3,000/\$60
\$75,000	\$3,750/\$75	\$2,250/\$45
\$60,000	\$3,000/\$60	\$1,800/\$36
\$50,000	\$2,500/\$50	\$1,500/\$30
\$40,000	\$2,000/\$40	\$1,200/\$24
\$30,000	\$1,500/\$30	\$900/\$18
\$25,000	\$1,250/\$25	\$750/\$15
\$15,000	\$750/\$15	\$450/\$9

Suggested Weekly Contribution Based on a Percentage Increase

Your Current Offertory Contribution	25% Increase	30% Increase	40% Increase
\$75.00	\$93.75	\$97.50	\$105.00
\$50.00	\$62.50	\$65.00	\$70.00
\$40.00	\$50.00	\$52.00	\$56.00
\$35.00	\$43.75	\$45.50	\$49.00
\$30.00	\$37.50	\$39.00	\$42.00
\$25.00	\$31.25	\$32.50	\$35.00
\$20.00	\$25.00	\$26.00	\$28.00
\$15.00	\$18.75	\$19.50	\$21.00
\$10.00	\$12.50	\$13.00	\$14.00
\$5.00	\$6.25	\$6.50	\$7.00

✠ PARISH NEWS ✠

PAINT THE TOWN!

Our Parish community continues with our Capital Campaign. Our next projects include exterior painting for the church and Parish house in Newton. We'd also like to paint the interior sanctuary of the church in Newton and complete some electrical upgrades to the church.

Other possible projects include work on our Plaistow and Newton parking lots, and ramp access to the church in Plaistow.

Can you help?

Any contribution is welcome. Make checks payable to
Saint Luke the Evangelist – Capital Campaign.



**PENTECOST IS UPON US!
SHOW YOUR TEAM SPIRIT!
WEAR RED TO CHURCH
ON THE WEEKEND OF
JUNE 8-9**

**Pentecost Evening Prayer and
Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament
Holy Angels Church
Sunday, June 9 at 6:00 PM
Pentecost Dessert Reception follows
at 6:30 PM in the parish hall**

TAI CHI

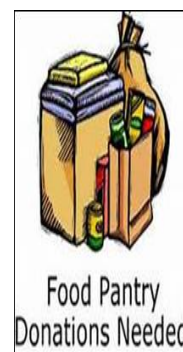
Tai Chi is the ancient Chinese martial art that is used for meditation, exercise, balance, and mind and body wellness. St. Luke the Evangelist Parish is offering this form of graceful, slow movement to help parishioners to gain strength, to improve their balance, flexibility, and range-of-motion, and to relieve stress. Classes are taught by members of the Oriental Healing Arts Association – a Senior Friendly and Senior Safe Tai Chi Program with the purpose of bringing Tai Chi to all age groups. Classes are on **Mondays at 9:00 AM** and **Thursdays at 3:00 PM and 6:30 PM** in the Plaistow Church Hall. The cost is \$5.00 per class, and for seniors on a fixed income, the cost is \$3.00 per class.



ST. LUKE'S WEBSITE! <http://stlukenh.org>

ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST FOOD PANTRY

Food or care items are always needed – donations can be dropped off at Church or are welcome at the Parish Office during regular business hours. Cash donations for food are always welcome – make checks payable to **St. Luke the Evangelist Food Pantry**. All donations to the Food Pantry go toward helping the needy of our communities.



FOOD PANTRY HOURS

Wednesday from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon

Thursday from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Friday from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon

For more information, call the St. Luke Food Pantry at **603-819-4949**.

WHILE AWAY THIS SPRING...

We appreciate all of you who remember to send in your Parish Offertory during the Spring even when on vacation or visiting other parishes. Thank you for remembering that our expenses also continue through the Spring months. We invite others to consider doing the same before or even after you return home.

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

✠ WEEKLY CALENDAR ✠

Sunday, June 2

11:00 AM Baptism Catechesis *Plaistow*
 12:00 PM Parish Pastoral Council Meeting *Plaistow*

Wednesday, June 5
HOLY ANGELS CHURCH OPEN
ALL DAY FOR PRAYER

Thursday, June 6

8:30 AM Adoration Begins *Newton*
 10:00 AM Prayer Shawl Ministry Meeting *Plaistow*
 8:30 PM Adoration Ends *Newton*

Saturday, June 8

3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation *Plaistow*

Sunday, June 9

6:00 PM Vespers *Plaistow*
 6:30 PM Pentecost Reception *Plaistow*

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL **IS COMING!!!**

Miraculous Mission
Jesus Saves The World
June 24 through 28, 2019
9:00 AM to 12:00 Noon

Children won't want to miss out! They will meet new friends, sing songs, make crafts, play games, and eat snacks. To register, call Joyce Szczapa at 382-8324, ext. 303 or take a registration form from the back of the church. Cost is \$50 for one child, \$75 for two children, and \$85 for three children.

**St. Vincent
de Paul
Society**



The generosity of your contributions have allowed us to help out those in need with rent, medical, and heating oil assistance. The St. Vincent de Paul Society is so grateful and blessed.

Our next meeting on **Wednesday, June 19 at 7:00 PM**. We meet downstairs in the Church Hall in Plaistow. **New members are always welcome!**

If you seek assistance or need information about the St. Vincent de Paul Society, call 603-382-8324 x315.

**Hear, OH LORD, and answer me
for I am poor and needy.**

✠ MASS INTENTIONS ✠

Saturday, June 1 ~ Vigil / Seventh Sunday of Easter
Acts 7:55-60; Rv 22:12-14, 16-17, 20; Jn 17:20-26
 4:00 PM Paul O'Leary by Colleen and Mark Hammond
Plaistow

Sunday, June 2 ~ Seventh Sunday of Easter
Acts 7:55-60; Rv 22:12-14, 16-17, 20; Jn 17:20-26
 8:00 AM Bernie Gosselin by the Knights of Columbus
Newton
 10:00 AM D. Jesselyn Driscoll by her family
Plaistow

Monday, June 3 ~ Charles Lwanga and Companions,
Martyrs
Acts 19:1-8; Jn 16:29-33
 8:00 AM Robert Huberdeau
 by his daughter, Paula Fournier
Newton

Tuesday, June 4 ~ Easter Weekday
Acts 20:17-27; Jn 17:1-11a
 8:00 AM In Thanksgiving for a Favor Received
Plaistow

Wednesday, June 5 ~ Boniface, Bishop and Martyr
Acts 20:28-38; Jn 17:11b-19
 6:30 PM Charles "Ray" and Florence Cooper
 by the Knights of Columbus
Plaistow

Thursday, June 6 ~ Norbert, Bishop
Acts 22:30, 23:6-11; Jn 17:20-26
 8:00 AM Barbara Tremblay by Cathy Smith
Newton

Friday, June 7 ~ Easter Weekday
Acts 25:13b-21; Jn 21:15-19
No Mass

Saturday, June 8 ~ Easter Weekday
Acts 28:16-20, 30-31; Jn 21:20-25 (Day)
Gn 11:1-9; Rom 8:22-27; Jn 7:37-39 (Vigil)
 4:00 PM Stanley Plonowski by Pat Zakiewicz
Plaistow

Sunday, June 9 ~ Pentecost
Acts 2:1-11; 1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13; Jn 20:19-23
 8:00 AM Bernie Gosselin by Susan and Mick Swanwick
Newton
 10:00 AM Edmund Caillouette
 by the Knights of Columbus
Plaistow

PRAYER LINE

St. Luke's offers a prayer line as a resource for those seeking prayer assistance. To submit your prayer request please call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 314 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

JUNE 2, 2019

✧ FAITH FORMATION & PARISH INFORMATION ✧

WORLDWIDE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

Allow God to journey with you in your marriage by attending a Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend. The next Weekends are **June 8-9, 2019** in Medway, MA and **September 14-15, 2019** in Medway, MA. For more information, call Stephen & Michelle O'Leary at 800-710-9963 or visit them at <https://wwmema.org/>.

RCIA

The **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults** is the process by which people become members of the Roman Catholic Church. If you or someone you know is interested in inquiring about becoming a member of the Roman Catholic Church, call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

ADULT CONFIRMATION

Are you an adult who has been Baptized and received Eucharist, but has not celebrated the sacrament of Confirmation? The adult Confirmation process is an opportunity to complete the Sacraments of Initiation. If you would like to prepare for Confirmation, or if you have questions, call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

PARENTS BAPTISM PREPARATION SESSION

The monthly preparation session for infant Baptism will be held after the 10:00 AM Liturgy on **Sunday, June 2, 2019** in the Parish Office living room. All parents planning to celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism are welcome. Families wishing to celebrate Baptism in the Church must be registered (according to Church Canon Law) and practicing (attending Sunday Mass) for 3 full months before a Baptism can be scheduled. The use of the envelope system is always optional; however, it does guarantee a manner of accountability. For most families, the Pastor or staff can easily verify attendance during these three months. Church Canon Law also regulates baptismal sponsors (godparents). Sponsors must be at least 16, fully initiated (having received Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation), and be practicing Catholics living Christian lives consistent with the Church's teaching. Please see Fr. Albert with questions.

ROSARY / FAMILY PRAYER HOUR LED BY KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

The St Jude Council of the Knights of Columbus leads a rosary on the 1st, 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM at Mary, Mother of the Church in Newton. The Knights also lead a Family Prayer Hour which includes a Rosary on the 3rd Thursday of each month, also starting at 7:00 PM at Mary, Mother of the Church in Newton. There are some quiet activities for the younger children during the Family Prayer Hour. The Knights invite all members of the parish to join them to pray the rosary and to participate in the Family Prayer Hour.

FIAT DAYS

**Young Women ~ Ages 14-18
JULY 8-11, 2019**

Northeast Catholic College, Warner, NH

For more information, or to register, please visit

www.liveinblackandwhite.com

Cost is \$50 for the weekend
(financial aid is available)

ADORATION

We are truly blessed to have times for Adoration of Our Lord in our Parish. This time of prayer and intercession is not only a source of great grace for the individual, but it is a great source of grace for us as a parish family, as well.

We have many who have made the commitment to spend an hour each week with our Eucharistic Lord, **but** we need more people so there will be at least two people at each hour. We are also looking for people who would be able to substitute.

**Newton – Thursday
8:30 AM – 8:30 PM**

If you can commit to one hour a week in Adoration of our Lord, or if you can be a substitute, please contact Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

The Church in Plaistow is open all day on Wednesdays for people to stop by and pray before the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle.

✧ PARISH DIRECTORY ✧

Parish Office	382-8324
Parish Prayer Line	382-8324 x 314
St. Vincent de Paul Society	382-8324 x 315
St. Luke's Food Pantry	819-4949
Preschool	382-9783
Presentation of Mary Convent	382-2744

Fr. Albert Tremblay
Cathy Smith
Joyce Szapa
Jackie Tremblay
Thomas Kondel
Val Barczak
Youth Ministry
Parish Council

fr.albert@stluketheevangelist.net
csmith@stluketheevangelist.net
jszczapa@stluketheevangelist.net
jtremlay@stluketheevangelist.net
tkondel@stluketheevangelist.net
mvmbarczak@comcast.net
youth@stluketheevangelist.net
parishcouncil@stluketheevangelist.net

✠ Parish News ~ Youth News ~ Around The Diocese ✠



BLESSING OF FATHERS

There will be a special blessing of fathers at all Masses on Father's Day Weekend, June 15-16, 2019

BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN

The annual "Baby Bottle Campaign" for the Pregnancy Care Center **begins on the weekend of June 15-16**. The Pregnancy Care Center is a Christ-centered ministry offering life-affirming services designed to empower women and men to make informed decisions about unexpected pregnancy, abstinence education, and recover from post-abortion trauma. These services are free and confidential. Please pick up a bottle and fill it with coins, bills or checks (made payable to PPC). **Return them by the weekend of July 6-7.**



Catholic Day
at NORTHEAST DELTA DENTAL STADIUM



Sunday, June 9, 2019
Fisher Cats vs. Flying Squirrels
12:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Tickets: \$8.00 - \$11.25
<http://bit.ly/FCCatholicDiocese>

Includes: Pregame prayer, recognition on the field, singing of the National Anthem & God Bless America, Catholic student announcer of the day, and more!

Please contact Brian Harrison with any questions
bharrison@rcbm.org • (603) 663-0173

YOUNG NEIGHBORS IN ACTION
July 21-26, 2019 ~ Worcester, MA

Young Neighbors In Action is a Catholic week-long mission for high school teens. To learn more, or to register, contact Brian Harrison at bharrison@rcbm.org

AMAZON SMILE

AmazonSmile.com is the same market platform as Amazon.com, but with the added benefit of allowing customers to donate 0.5% of the price of items purchased to a charitable organization. Please register today to start shopping and donating at www.amazonsmile.com. Be sure to choose:

St Luke the Evangelist Parish, Plaistow.



St. Luke the Evangelist is now on Facebook! Go to www.facebook.com/stlukenh.org/ or **St. Luke the Evangelist Parish – Newton/Plaistow** and give us a Like! Please invite fellow parishioners & friends to do the same.

JESUS aCROSS THE BORDER

Friday, June 14, 2019

YOUNG ADULT MASS at 7:00 PM

St. Clement Eucharistic Shrine

1105 Boylston, Street, Boston, MA

LIVE CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC

The Bebop Pub

1116 Boylston Street, Boston, MA

7:00 PM to 1:00 AM

www.jesusacrosstheborder.org

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
ST JUDE COUNCIL # 6617
GIVE YOUR PARISH COMMUNITY
1 HOUR A MONTH

The Knights of Columbus are a vital and vibrant part of the St Luke the Evangelist Parish. We welcome any practicing Catholic man 18 or older to join the Knights, whose main purpose is charitable works in support of our parish and community. Joining is simple – talk to a brother Knight or you can now join on-line. Go to www.kofc.org/joinus. Your Council is involved in many activities from collecting money for people with intellectual disabilities through the Tootsie Roll Drive to the annual St Jude Golf Open which raises money for parish families in need. The list is as long as you want it to be. Do you have a certain passion you would like to get involved in? Come join us and make it a reality! We are Catholic men. We live by principles informed by faith. We are sons, fathers, husbands, and grandfathers. Join us on life's greatest adventure to discover the man God calls you to be. Feel free to call Dan Sullivan at 603-770-4803, email him at dans49@comcast.net, or catch him at the 8:00 AM Sunday Mass in Newton. For more information about the Knights, go to www.kofc.org/un/en/todays-knights/what-we-do.html

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



Unity

Lord,
you gather your community
of believers that they may be one.
While we do not seek
division or desire to be apart
from you or your people,
it is easy for us to find
ourselves separated and alone,
because of our words or actions.
As we walk through this week,
allow us to remove
the garment of isolation
and independence
that hinders the harmony
of our living in community as
your people.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Sunday, June 2, 2019
So That They May All Be One

Today's Readings: Acts 7:55–60; Psalm 97:1–2, 6–7, 9; Revelation 22:12–14, 16–17, 20; John 17:20–26. Stephen, the first martyr, was among the group of deacons ordained in the Acts of the Apostles. He was filled with the Holy Spirit, but his words were considered blasphemy, a sacrilege to the Sanhedrin. They used stones to silence him, but he called out loudly to his Lord, to receive his spirit and to forgive his persecutors. Both of those phrases echoed Jesus' words on the Cross.

After Stephen's prayer of forgiveness in the First Reading, we hear Jesus pray for unity in the Gospel. During the final portion of the Last Supper discourse, Jesus

expresses the love and care he has for his followers. This prayer that all believers "may be one" is as much a prayer for Christians today as it was for the first disciples. Jesus desires for all of us to be with him and to be one with the Father. Jesus wants all to live in the joy of the Kingdom. He wants the world to know that his Spirit will inspire and move them to accomplish wonders that will give glory to the Father. How can you more intentionally live in harmony with those with whom you disagree? Are you willing to carve out time in quiet to listen to the Spirit? In following the Spirit, Christians learn how to witness to God's glory.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, June 3

Courage and Peace

The disciples assure Jesus that they know everything about him and believe he came from God. However, Jesus tells them that they will scatter, leaving him alone in his suffering. In this moment, as he speaks of their abandonment, he comforts them with words of peace and courage. In what area of your life is it difficult to afford the courage to proclaim Jesus as Lord? *Today's Readings: Acts 19:1–8; Psalm 68:2–3, 4–5, 6–7; John 16:29–33.*

Tuesday, June 4

The Glory of God

Jesus' prayer for his disciples is also a prayer for Christians today. Spend some time in prayer today, asking Christ to bless all those followers who have shared and continue to share the Good News of faith with you. Ask Christ to hold close all those who have wandered away and do not feel as though they belong to him. May we be united for the glory of God. *Today's Readings: Acts 20:17–27; Psalm 68:10–11, 20–21; John 17:1–11.*

Wednesday, June 5

Keep Watch over the Flock

The Acts of the Apostles offers a beautiful image of Paul among the elders of the church of Ephesus. After he addresses them, he kneels down and prays with them. They are so moved by his words and the realization that they will not see him again, they begin to weep without restraint and throw their arms around him and kiss him. May our love of God and neighbor move us so that there is no doubt about the work of the Spirit in our heart. *Today's Readings: Acts 20:28–38; Psalm 68:29–30, 33, 35, 35–36; John 17:11–19.*

Thursday, June 6

Hidden Gifts

While praying, Jesus thanks the Father for the gift of his followers. Imagine Jesus' gratitude for human beings who are messy, weak, and flawed. Jesus responds to this gift with a wish that believers be with Jesus and see his glory. Considering that all are a gift to the Son, reflect on the sacredness within each person. *Today's Readings: Acts 22:30; 23:6–11; Psalm 16:1–2, 5, 7–8, 9–10, 11; John 17:20–26.*

Friday, June 7

Ancient Cultures

Ancient cultures often speak of both living well and dying well. It is unusual today to hear people look forward to dying, but what if we knew our final act would give glory to God? That is what Jesus promises Peter regarding his death. Would such knowledge transform the way you live? Have you considered how every moment of our lives, our faith, and our love of the Lord give glory to God? *Today's Readings: Acts 25:13–21; Psalm 103:1–2, 11–12, 19–20; John 21:15–19.*

Saturday, June 8

One Book

Have you ever been so captivated by an experience that time seems to have been suspended? The closing verse of the Gospel hints at this very nature of Jesus Christ. John writes that this book of the Bible is his testimony to the life of Christ. He could have written more but the information about Jesus is more than the books that could be written. More important than words is the relationship that is formed with Christ. Take to heart John's words to grow in love with Christ. *Today's Readings: Acts 28:16–20, 30–31; Psalm 11:4, 5, 7; John 21:20–25.*





Bringing Home the Word +

The Ascension of the Lord (C)

June 2, 2019

Putting Prayer First

By Mary Katharine Deeley

In Luke's ascension account from Acts, Jesus admonishes his apostles to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the Spirit because they are witnesses of his mission and message. When the time for his ascension comes, Jesus blesses them, then "was lifted up" (1:9). We don't hear the great commission to go out to, preach to, and baptize all nations as we do in Matthew's Gospel (28:19–20). Instead, Luke's account leaves us with an image of the apostles joyfully returning to Jerusalem: "They were continually in the temple praising God" (24:53).

Returning to Acts, I love that the early disciples' first order of business—even before Pentecost—was to gather to pray (1:14). Paul often admonished the early Christians to pray constantly. He knew that prayer grounds us in the Lord and strengthens us to lay down our lives and carry our crosses. Prayer focuses our attention on God's call and our response to it. The apostles' prayer opened them to receive the promised gift of the Spirit and strengthened them for their mission—to let the world know that Jesus is Lord, that the kingdom of God has come, and that we have been restored through the death and resurrection of Christ.

Thus should our week begin: in praise and worship before God, in gathered prayer. Like the disciples in Jerusalem, the Lord will open our minds "to understand the scriptures" (Luke 24:45). We, too, will be filled with the Spirit and be sent out as joyful witnesses to God's presence and saving work. +

Sunday Readings

Acts 1:1–11

He presented himself alive to them by many proofs after he had suffered, appearing to them during forty days.

Ephesians 1:17–23 or Hebrews 9:24–28; 10:19–23

And he put all things beneath his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church.

Luke 24:46–53

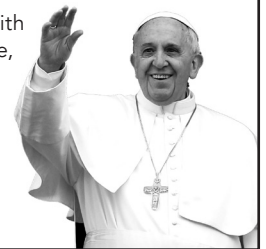
As he blessed them he parted from them and was taken up to heaven.

The early disciples' first order of business—even before Pentecost—was to gather to pray.

A Word from Pope Francis

Do I speak with Jesus or am I frightened of silence?
Do I allow the Holy Spirit to speak in my heart?
Do I ask Jesus: what do you want me to do, what do you want from my life?...
Speak continually with Jesus, in the good times and in the bad, when you do right, and when you do wrong. Do not fear him! This is prayer.

—Prayer vigil with young people, July 27, 2013



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Do I make prayer a priority or is it low on my to-do list?
- When I pray, do I focus my attention on God's call or do I allow my attention to wander?

Is "'Til Death Do Us Part" Realistic?

By Jim and Susan Vogt

In addition to leading marriage preparation and enrichment programs, we've been responsible for divorce ministries in two dioceses. It's humbling to hear experiences of those who expected lasting marriages but instead saw their hopes and lives crumble. Here are some of the lessons we've learned.

The three most important things for a healthy marriage are commitment, commitment, and commitment. With divorce rates around 50 percent, commitment seems unfashionable. Has human nature changed so much? Perhaps human nature hasn't changed, but our culture has. We live in a throwaway society; if something breaks, our impulse is to get a new one rather than fix the old.

Modern society also has more temptations than ever. With men and women working as colleagues, spouses spend more time with members of the opposite sex who share common interests and are on their best behavior. (Workplace morals aren't necessarily higher, but at least colleagues don't have spit-up on their clothes or wear raggedy T-shirts.) Your spouse may have been alluring during courtship, but coworkers sharing career goals can be tempting. This makes commitment harder than ever.

In some ways, marriage is getting



honestly and listen respectfully have hollow commitments. Shared values also support commitment. If one spouse values a simple lifestyle and another wants to accumulate wealth, there will be tension. If faith and morals are important to one but not the other, key decisions become reasons to argue.

Church Wisdom

What does the Church say about marriage, besides the conventional wisdom of commit, communicate, and seek common values? The Church says, of course, what Jesus said: "Love one another as I love you" (John 15:12). Wedding vows take a lifetime to live out. Let's unpack the grace behind the vows:

Exclusivity: *I, ___, take you, ___, to be my (wife/husband).* Specific names indicate this is an exclusive commitment between this man and this woman.

Fidelity: *I promise to be true to you.* Fidelity often gets translated as sexual loyalty—neither spouse will commit adultery. But there are nonhuman

better. Once it was enough for husbands to be providers and for wives to care for the home and children. Now we expect couples to share dreams and be friends and life partners.

We expect couples to practice commitment skills—especially communication. Spouses unwilling to speak

"mistresses," too. Work, hobbies, children, and more can cut into the romance and attention spouses should give each other.

Unconditional love: *In good times and in bad, in sickness and in health....* Loving unconditionally is a promise for the future. It's more a decision to love than merely feeling love. Not knowing what changes the future holds, can I love you if you become old, fat, or senile? That's a lot to say a blind yes to.

Covenant: *I will love you and honor you....* Unlike contracts, a covenant goes beyond a fifty-fifty agreement. Sometimes one spouse must bend 75 percent while the other gives 25 percent. It's not always fair, but a promise is a promise.

Permanence: *All the days of my life....* Traditionally, permanence is understood as not getting divorced. A commitment to permanence means daily attentiveness to the relationship. It may mean a nightly walk to keep communication flowing. It's preventive maintenance.

Prayer: *Amen*, a short prayer, is the couple's way of saying yes to each other and God. +



Risen Lord, your resurrection and ascension give witness to God's power. May my life bear witness to God's love, compassion, forgiveness, and peace.

—From *Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter Through Pentecost*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

June 3–8

Monday, St. Charles Lwanga and Companions: Acts 19:1–8 / Jn 16:29–33

Tuesday, Easter Weekday: Acts 20:17–27 / Jn 17:1–11a

Wednesday, St. Boniface: Acts 20:28–38 / Jn 17:11b–19

Thursday, Easter Weekday: Acts 22:30; 23:6–11 / Jn 17:20–26

Friday, Easter Weekday: Acts 25:13b–21 / Jn 21:15–19

Saturday, Easter Weekday: Acts 28:16–20, 30–31 / Jn 21:20–25