

MATRIMONY SUNDAY SPEECH

2009-06-06 St. Luke's Parish

Claudia:

Good afternoon. My name is Claudia Paolucci.

My husband and I were asked by Father Gilles to say a few words this matrimony weekend. Last month, Mario and I celebrated our 27th wedding anniversary. As a family, we have been parishioners here at St. Luke's for about 23 year now.

My husband is the more talkative one in our relationship so I will allow him the larger portion of our talk!

I would like to say though that our relationship has, from its very beginning, been centered on Jesus. In fact we first met each other in a Christian Youth Group. We have been blessed countless times throughout our marriage, through good times and through difficult times. God has given us two children who have, in a real sense, grown up in this parish. They have been our greatest blessing.

I'll now pass the microphone over to Mario...

Mario:

Good afternoon.

As Claudia mentioned, we were asked to talk to you today a little about God's presence in our marriage; 27 years of God's presence! But in truth, God has been present in our relationship even before this time.

CEGEP 1977. One day as a young student, I was scanning the school newspaper, on a break between classes and there in the ***Champlain Bugle*** was an invitation to come and join a Christian Fellowship Club....I really did not have a strong interest in such things at that time! But I felt the Lord talk to my heart "Mario, make this small effort for me... go have a look". And so, I went and had a look ...and there I met a young women who I would want to spend the rest of my days with. God is truly great!

Marriage is first and foremost a sacrament...a sacrament with real power where the one plus the one becomes much greater than the two. With the years, Claudia and I come to a deeper understand of this.

So far, over a 27 year career in business I have, as many of you have, lived thru the many ups and downs of working life. The job losses, the re-locations, the unexpected career changes. So many times, when I found myself struggling, Claudia, always speaking from the heart, would say just the right thing to me...tell me exactly what I needed to hear. Each time I marveled at her wisdom. She and I both know, however, that the Holy Spirit speaks to the heart AND... thru the sacrament of marriage, He does so in a very powerful way!

In "Sickness and in Health": During our wedding ceremony we **heard** these words. Two month after the birth of our daughter we

would **live** them. In February 1987 I was diagnosed with a life-threatening illness, Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

Sometimes, when a life-changing event like cancer strikes a family two things can happen: It can destroy or it can rise up. When the foundation is rock solid...built on **THE ROCK** (Christ)...remarkable things can happen. **Nothing is impossible with God.**

Claudia was there for me right thru to the finish line of my chemo treatments ...she was right there waiting for me, when just a year later, I crossed another finish line, that of my first marathon! **Truly, nothing is impossible with God.**

Marriage is not just about two people who sincerely love each other and occupy the same living space, it is something more...a sacrament with great power and it comes from the hand of God.

Claudia and I would like to invite all the young people here this afternoon who are in serious relationships and who may be considering marriage, to open your hearts, to gain a deeper understanding of what marriage truly is. Today the world asks "Is marriage dead?" Sometimes it even asks "Is God dead?" God is not dead...He's not even sick! He reigns and He is almighty God. Today the world too often minimizes marriage, discredits it. Claudia and I are here today to tell you differently. Happy Matrimony weekend and may God bless.