



## **Bulletin Insert – Marriage Is a Trip and God Has the Map**

Gifted pianists or brilliant pediatric surgeons will often speak of their profession as a calling, a pull in the depth of their hearts that only it can fulfill. It is wonderful to have a career or a passion that is a vocation, but in a deeper way, marriage is a Vocation, a call put on one’s heart by God, and a way to love that each person fulfills in a unique way.

In the sacrament of marriage, spouses follow the “way” of Jesus (Jn 14:6), making a generous, irrevocable gift of self. The 20th century theologian Hans Urs Von Balthasar wrote, “The inner form of love is a vow.” In other words, authentic love is total and forever. Through their vows, couples receive the grace to live out their high calling. Their life in Christ unfolds, and by his grace they become the best version of themselves. And it shows! In fact, married people and their children are more likely to attend church and enjoy better health, finances, life satisfaction, and happiness than their unmarried peers!

Self-gift can seem especially risky in a self-centered culture. Yet God has a plan for each person’s life that includes a specific, personalized Vocation. God’s plan makes the adventure and the risk worth taking. Young men and women should pray, “God, are you calling me to marriage?” The Vocation of marriage requires discernment and preparation when young, learning to give of oneself through service, self-sacrifice, works of mercy, and choosing to love especially when it’s hard.

This World Marriage Day, thank God for the gift of marriage. Witness to the beauty of marriage by going on a date, talking about your marriage with your kids, and showing the world that this Vocation is truly a pilgrimage of faith and hope in love, because God has the map!

**“God who created man out of love also calls him to love - the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being... Since God created him man and woman, their mutual love becomes an image of the absolute and unfailing love with which God loves man.”**

**Catechism of the Catholic Church #1604**

### **Saints Louis and Zélie Martin**

Louis and Zélie Martin, parents of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, are celebrated for their exemplary Christian marriage and family life. Born in Bordeaux, France, in 1823, Louis became a watchmaker, while Zélie, born in 1831 in Gandelain, mastered lace-making and ran a successful business. Both initially felt called to religious life but found in each other a different vocation.

They met in 1858, married three months later, and quickly formed a strong spiritual bond. The Martins had nine children, though four died in infancy. Zélie found comfort in the Lord, saying, “We shall find our little ones again up above.” She balanced motherhood with her business until she passed away from breast cancer at age 46. Louis carried on raising their five daughters in the faith, all of whom later entered religious life. They in turn cared for him when he struggled with dementia in his later years. Louis and Zélie were canonized in 2015.

### **Discussion Question**

Saints Louis and Zélie balanced work, family life and faith. They had great joys but also great hardships in their marriage. What can the lives of Louis and Zélie teach us about becoming saints as a married couple and as a family?

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