

# Wedding Jubilee Celebration

## Spanish Below

### Introduction

Happy anniversary! In this 225th anniversary year of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, I wanted to strengthen the tradition of celebrating wedding jubilees here in this Cathedral dedicated to Mary Our Queen. What a joy it is to see so many of you gathered from all parts of the Archdiocese to give thanks to God for your years of married life, to ask God's help in the challenges you face in living your vocation, & to seek God's blessings upon your children, your grandchildren and all your loved ones.

As I reflect on the 225th years that the Archdiocese has been in existence, I naturally think of the renowned Archbishops who went before me such as Archbishop John Carroll, our first Archbishop, or James Cardinal Gibbons who ranks among the most influential leaders in all of American Catholic history.

But when I think more deeply about the Archdiocese, I realize it too is a family, God's family, here in Baltimore and the nine counties of Maryland. I recognize that the real history of the Archdiocese is been made and written in the lives of the families that comprise this local Church ... The story of your lives - your joys, sorrows, challenges, hopes, dreams & fears - your story is at heart of the history of this great Archdiocese. For the Church is made up of people to be sure - but mostly it is made up of married couples, like yourselves, who have accepted from God the vocation to marriage and have also accepted the beautiful but challenging responsibility of family life.

### The Care of Pope Francis for Families

There can be no doubt about Pope Francis love and care for families. Back in June he celebrated the anniversaries of fifteen couples who were married between 20 and 60 years. He joined them in giving thanks to God for the gift of married love and encouraged them to continue living their vocation generously. He reminded them about what is at the heart of vocation of marriage: fidelity, perseverance, and fruitfulness... three qualities that reflect the way in which God loves his people.

God is faithful – he keeps his promises—his love for you is everlasting. Ezekiel reminds us that when we find it hard to do what is right we sometimes think that God is unfair. When a couple has to make a huge sacrifice for the sake of their children, they may be tempted to think God has treated them unfairly, or even that God has abandoned them. Yet sometimes the greatest trials turn out to be the greatest blessings – for it is in challenging times that we discover how deep and persistent God’s love really is, and in that love your love deepens in its fidelity and beauty.

God’s love is preserving; so too your love for one another perseveres. And it isn’t always easy, is it? When St. Paul says, “Do nothing out of selfishness ...” or “humbly regard others as more important than yourselves ...” (including your spouse!) you may be tempted to say, “Easier said than done!” Unless, of course, your love for each other is rooted in Christ’s love. Jesus who became our servant, who laid down his life on the Cross for us, and whose love conquered sin, death, selfishness, and indeed all those bad attitudes and vices that can cause a marriage to fall apart. In his love you find the strength “... to press on, always trying to work things out ...” “getting up every morning to carry the family forward ...” In his love you find the strength to forgive one another and to allow yourself to be forgiven.

And God’s love is fruitful, so too your love for each other must be fruitful. In the Gospel, a father sends two sons to work in the vineyard, precisely so that the vineyard can yield good fruit. One was willing and the other wasn’t. Perhaps one can sympathize with the second son who at first did not want to go into the vineyard but afterwards relented. When a couple thinks about the challenges of raising a family, not just the expense but all the spiritual and emotional energy that is required, they may hesitate or be tempted not to welcome children into their home (or else they may wonder why their love for each other hasn’t borne fruit.) But when we turn to Jesus we discover that his love for Church has borne great fruit. When his love touches our hearts, our minds are opened to the gift of life and guided and strengthened in the challenges of raising families and helping children – whatever age they may be—to grow in virtue, faith & holiness.

### **The Family As Agent of Evangelization**

Yes, the story of the Archdiocese of Baltimore is being written every day in your

homes and in the homes of all its families. The faithfulness of your love for one another, the enduring and sacrificial quality of your love, and the physical and spiritual fruitfulness of your love - these are a great witness to the Gospel that builds up this local Church like nothing else.

So our history the history of the Premier See, is being written in the decisions you make big and small, in your dedication to transmitting the faith to your children, and bringing them to Mass each and every Sunday, in the prayerfulness of your homes, and in your spirit of loving service to all those in need, in your desire to help your young people find their God-given vocation, whether its marriage, religious life, or the priesthood.

Truly, the Archdiocese of Baltimore, God's family here in Maryland, is only as strong as its families. As someone once said, "If we get the vocation of marriage right, all the other vocations in the Church will take care of themselves..." for it is in good solid Catholic families that the faith is passed on from one generation to another and that young people are given the freedom and encouragement to embrace their God-given vocation in life.

Thank you for embracing the vocation of marriage, thank you for your fidelity, your perseverance, and your fruitfulness. May the Lord continue to bless you and your families and keep you always in his love!

### **Spanish**

Queridos hermanos y hermanas en Cristo, desde los comienzos de la Iglesia, la familia cristiana, fundada en el sacramento de matrimonio entre un hombre y una mujer, y junto con los hijos, ha sido conocida como la 'Iglesia Domestica', lo cual implica realidades profundas e importantes.

El *Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica* habla de la familia como el lugar donde los hijos reciben el primer anuncio de la fe, donde se aprende el valor del trabajo, donde se aprende a perdonar y ser perdonado, donde se aprende a orar y a ofrecer la vida por los demás, de modo que la familia es realmente una escuela de amor, de perdón, y de oración.

Agradecemos a nuestro Padre Celestial por la bendición del matrimonio y de la

familia, y hoy oramos de forma especial por los matrimonios y pedimos la gracia necesaria para poder vivir nuestras vocaciones particulares.

En definitiva, la Iglesia es la 'familia de Dios'; Somos sus hijos e hijas amados. Que nuestras palabras y acciones den gloria al Señor Y que nuestras familias, con su ejemplo de amor, proclamen siempre la alegría del Evangelio.

Que Dios les bendiga.