

Dear Parishioners,

I wonder if children still read or hear stories that end with the marriage of the hero and heroine and the words, “and so they lived happily ever after.” (Am I now betraying my age?)

Our Lord said, “I have told you these things that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” (Jn 15:11) Joy is the Lord’s desire for us and one great path to this joy is marriage. A man and woman marry to form a family, to be sure, but I should like to think they also marry to be happy, to be joyful.

I mention this since today is World Marriage Day and its theme is “Called to the Joy of Love.” Marriage is a calling to a life of joy, which emanates from the mutual love of husband and wife, but it also has a divine source. It is the experience of knowing that one is unconditionally loved by God and that nothing can take that away.

Fr. Henri Nouwen reminds us that joy does not simply happen to us. It is the result of our choices. He writes, “We have to choose joy and keep choosing it every day.” This does not mean of course that married life is devoid of struggles. We have no control over many circumstances of life, but we do have a choice in regard to the way we respond to these circumstances.

Fr. Nouwen offers this suggestion:

Maybe we could spend a moment at the end of each day and decide to remember that day— whatever may have happened—as a day for which to be grateful. In so doing, we increase our heart’s capacity to choose joy. And as our hearts become more joyful, we will become...a source of joy for others. Just as sadness begets sadness, so joy begets joy...Joy is contagious!

Today we salute married couples and pray that they grow in joy and that rooted in God’s love may they “live happily ever after.”

With affection, Msgr. Gervasio