



Archdiocese  
of Vancouver

**Easter 4-C**  
**Marriage Anniversary Mass**  
**Homily**

St. Paul's Parish, Richmond

11 May 2025

Dear Father Smith, Father Sajy, Deacon Rolly, and especially dear brothers and sisters who are celebrating a milestone anniversary of your married life, who are here with your family members and friends:

***Introduction***

On this Good Shepherd Sunday, we mark a blessed occasion in the lives of the 145 couples from 39 of our parishes, representing 4,655 years of married life. On behalf of everyone in the Archdiocese – priests, deacons, consecrated women and men, and the lay faithful –, I thank the good Lord for the gift of raising marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament, and offer you heartfelt congratulations and the assurance of our prayers.

## ***Reflecting on the Past***

On a milestone occasion, it's good to reflect on God's goodness, which has accompanied you through the years. Recalling the pivotal moments of your married life enables you to renew your commitment to the Lord and each other with gratitude and hope.

Of course, every couple has its own story to tell about why their anniversary, especially a "milestone" one, is so special. No doubt you can recall how and where you first met, the conditions of your courtship, how your love for each other has survived the inevitable times of trial, how your families have grown and, for many of you, how your children have spread their wings, giving you grandchildren and even great-grandchildren.<sup>i</sup>

As time passes, there's no doubt that you recognize that each spouse is an instrument God uses for one spouse to help the other mature and grow in holiness. At every stage of their married life, couples form each other by guiding their husband or wife to a deeper and more intimate friendship with their partner and the Lord Jesus himself.

## ***Fostering a Culture of Marriage Among the Young***

Thank you, dear jubilarians, for inspiring all of us, especially young people, by your example. Despite your challenges, you have faithfully kept the vows made on your wedding day. This has been possible because of the sacramental grace poured out on you throughout

your married life.

“In today’s world, relationships are often viewed as disposable. . . . The commitment to fidelity and love that marriage entails is a source of hope for all generations.”<sup>ii</sup> In a culture that idolizes the ephemeral and pleasures of the moment, you jubilarians bear witness to the truth that, in God’s plan, man and woman are created for a faithful and lasting love. Thank you for your timely and needed example.

When you promised each other lifelong love, you surrendered your future God’s hands and the hands of your beloved. Such a permanent commitment scares many of our young people. They can’t imagine placing that much trust in another person. Instead, they say “yes” to the relationship for today, but for tomorrow, who knows?

Dear anniversary couples: you bear witness to the good news that the definitive commitment of marriage is not only possible, but also humanly and spiritually rewarding.

### ***Trials and Blessings***

Marriage itself is also a pilgrimage. It’s a sacred journey toward God embarked on by two hearts united in love, trusting that God leads the way. Like any pilgrimage, marriage is a journey filled with uncertainties, challenges, and moments of grace.<sup>iii</sup> It is a lifelong journey of forgiving and learning the art of selfless compromise.

As you reflect on your years of marriage, I’m sure you can also

recall times of struggle and hardship, and times of peace and joy. How could fifty or sixty years of marriage, or even just five or ten, be without trials? You have known sorrow. You have known suffering. You have known disappointment. You also bring these memories to today's celebration. Yet, through it all, you have come here to thank the Lord and proclaim that your marriage has overflowed with blessings beyond all your trials.<sup>iv</sup> The grace God promised on your wedding day, though sometimes hidden, has been poured into your hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to you (cf. Rom 5:5). Couples who put God at the centre of their marriage can achieve happiness now and in eternal life.

### ***Pope Leo XIV***

I can't let this Good Shepherd Sunday pass, without mentioning the surprise and joyful election of Leo XIV as Bishop of Rome and the 266<sup>th</sup> Successor of Peter. In his first homily, he said:

You have called me to carry that cross, and to be blessed with that mission [of the Ministry of Peter], and I know I can rely on each and every one of you to walk with me, as we continue as a Church, as a community of friends of Jesus, as believers to announce the Good News, to announce the Gospel.<sup>v</sup>

And if you are asking, what does the Holy Father see as his

ministry, he answered that yesterday in his address to the Cardinals:

I would like us to renew together today our complete commitment to the path that the universal Church has now followed for decades in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. Pope Francis masterfully and concretely set it forth in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, from which I would like to highlight several fundamental points: the return to the primacy of Christ in proclamation (cf. No. 11); the missionary conversion of the entire Christian community (cf. No. 9); growth in collegiality and synodality (cf. No. 33); attention to the *sensus fidei* (cf. Nos. 119-120), especially in its most authentic and inclusive forms, such as popular piety (cf. No. 123); loving care for the least and the rejected (cf. No. 53); courageous and trusting dialogue with the contemporary world in its various components and realities (cf. No. 84; Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 1-2).

### ***Gospel of the Good Shepherd***

In today's short but consoling Gospel, Jesus tells us that we are secure in his hands (cf. Jn 10:29). He is the Good Shepherd who loves us and hunts us down when we go astray.

If we are ever to guide or shepherd others, whether our own

children or anyone entrusted to our care, we first of all have to be good sheep. Jesus was, after all, first the “Lamb of God” – as pointed out in today’s second reading (cf. Rev 7:17) – before he revealed himself as the Good Shepherd of others. “To save the lost sheep which we all are, the Shepherd became lamb, and let himself be immolated so as to take upon himself and to take away the sin of the world.”<sup>vi</sup>

The same goes for us. To be good parents, for example, don’t we first have to be good sons and daughters? And to be good priests, don’t we first have to be obedient sons of the Church? How can we love others if we do not know that we are loved?<sup>vii</sup> We can be shepherds to others only if we first listen to the Good Shepherd’s voice and know in our hearts that he loves us.

### ***Conclusion***

May the Lord bless all of you who are celebrating milestone anniversaries! May you continue to radiate to others the beauty and joy of the vocation and mission of married life! Our world needs this Good News. As we continue this Eucharist, let us pray for the Lord’s abundant blessings upon you and your families.

✠J. Michael Miller, CSB

Apostolic Administrator

Archdiocese of Vancouver

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<sup>i</sup>Cf. Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Homily (8 June 2019).

<sup>ii</sup>Bishop Robert Barron, Chairman of USCCB Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth Committee (6 February 2025).

<sup>iii</sup>Cf. Bishop Evelio Menjívar, Homily (8 February 2025).

<sup>iv</sup>Cf. Archbishop Mark Coleridge, Homily (4 October 2014).

<sup>v</sup>Leo XIV, Homily in the Sistine Chapel (9 May 2025).

<sup>vi</sup>Francis, *Regina Caeli* (17 April 2016).

<sup>vii</sup>Cf. Jean Vanier, *Drawn into the Mystery of Jesus through the Gospel of John* (Ottawa: Novalis, 2004), 184-186.