

# Bishop's Message on Marriage

My dear People: April 1978  
I want to speak to those of you about to enter into the vocation of marriage.

There are so many messages in my heart and mind as I envision you, so many words of encouragement, excitement and also caution that spring forward. Time and space will only allow a few well-chosen words.

First and foremost, I want to speak of your marriage as a celebration of love: the celebration of the mutual love of a man and a woman and the celebration of the love of God which has brought you together. The Sacrament of Matrimony challenges you, to become so completely one in mind, in heart and in affection that the world recognizes in your marital love the continued, healing and saving presence of Jesus in the world. Wedded life is meant to be a clear reflection, a living sign, of God's loving union with us, His people. This is why your marriage is a vocation — a call as important as the priesthood, the religious life or the single life in terms of the vitality of the Church, because **YOU ARE THE CHURCH.**

Secondly, a word of caution. Marriage is a lifetime commitment. You will find (as every married person does) that at some point along your journey together much will be demanded of you personally to maintain that commitment. Those times of real disillusionment and discouragement will be the greatest test of your love for each other and for the Lord who has brought you together. Expect those

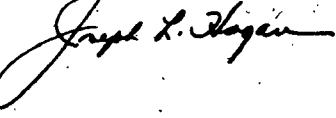
times. Expect that the love you have for each other will be strained at times, but that working through those crises leads to a joy ever more profound than what you feel for each other now. Surround yourselves with friends who share your convictions about marriage, who will be your support and even inspiration in living a life focused on the Lord and each other.

Finally, know that the entire Church celebrates with you. People you probably don't even know yet, such as your Pre-Cana teams will join in the celebration of love and commitment on your

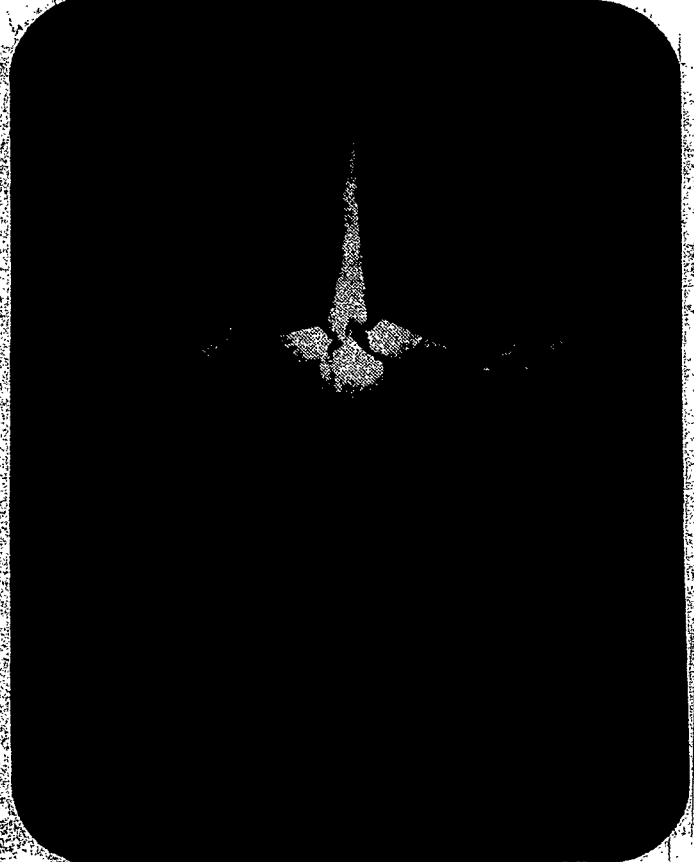
wedding day. And know that the love of the Church for you will always be there as a continuing support in your vocation.

I pray that in the days, months and years ahead you grow in love for each other and share this love generously with those whose lives you touch.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



+ Most Reverend Joseph L. Hogan, D.D. Bishop of Rochester

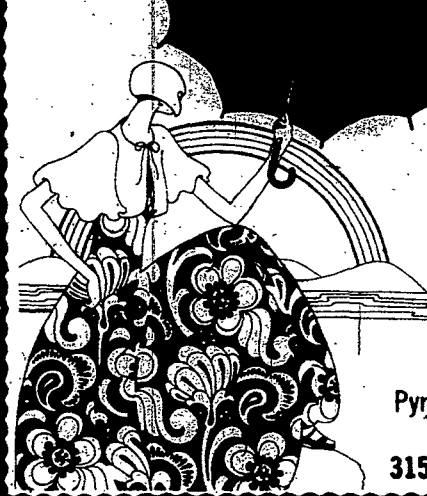


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