



### **Pope Francis:**

*“The image of God is the married couple: the man and the woman; not only the man, not only the woman, but both of them together. This is the image of God: love, God’s covenant with us is represented in that covenant between man and woman. And this is very beautiful!” (General Audience, April 2, 2014)*

### **Breaking open the theme:**

It is a beautiful truth! A husband and wife image God in their marital union. As the Second Vatican Council taught, married love is “caught up” in the divine love of God, who is a Communion of Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Gaudium et Spes, no. 48). In the union of husband and wife there is mutual love and reciprocity, which reflects the love of God Himself. In Ephesians, St. Paul teaches that Christian spouses reflect a “great mystery”: the nuptial relationship between Christ and His Church (Eph 5:21-22). In their ordinary lives, husbands and wives can be a visible sign of Christ’s love for His Church by giving themselves in fidelity and service to each other and to those around them. This is a high calling...and a beautiful one!

### **Reflection:**

Think of an example of a good marriage. The husband and wife go out of their way to do nice things for each other. They give of their time and energy without asking for anything in return. They are faithfully committed to their marriage and are ready to make sacrifices for the other. Some could say they are head-over-heels in love with one another, even after many years! Does this describe your marriage? When spouses exhibit marital behavior like this, they help us understand what it means that marriage is an image of God’s love. Husbands and wives are called to display those qualities of love that Christ Himself displayed on the Cross.

### **Put it into practice:**

1.- Pray: Read together 1 Corinthians 13, St. Paul’s hymn of love.

- 2.- Reflect: Is your love for each other patient, kind, etc. (from the list in 1 Corinthians)? Where can you grow?
- 3.- Do: Place a picture from your wedding day in a well-trafficked area of your home (if there's not one already), and put on it or next to it the words, "We are called to be an image of God's love." Consider this your daily reminder.

**Prayer for Married Couples:**

Almighty and eternal God,  
You blessed the union of husband and wife  
So that we might reflect the union of Christ with his Church:  
look with kindness on us.  
Renew our marriage covenant.  
Increase your love in us,  
and strengthen our bond of peace  
so that, [with our children],  
we may always rejoice in the gift of your blessing.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.