

For those who are married

The sacrament of marriage is given to the Church to enrich the love of husband and wife and to strengthen family life. The grace of the sacrament makes Christ present in the life of the couple and of their family

If you yourself are married, take the opportunity to spend a little time to reflect on your marriage and the graces God offers there.

What at this time are the joys and challenges of your marriage? How at this time especially are you called to show love for your spouse? In what way does his or her love support you?

Read the following passage from St. Paul. Imagine that you are standing before God with your partner, and that this prayer is being prayed for you.

This, then, is what I pray, kneeling before the Father, from whom every family, whether spiritual or natural, takes its name:

Out of his infinite glory, may he give you the power through his Spirit for your hidden self to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, and then, planted in love and built on love, you will with all the saints have strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth; until knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, you are filled with the utter fullness of God.

Glory be to him whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine; glory be to him from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen.

Ephesians 3: 14-21

Speak to St Paul, and to God, about the feelings the passage evokes in you.

The contents of this leaflet, produced for the parish of St John's Wood, are adapted from resources produced by the National Office for Vocations: www.ukvocation.org

Our Vocation in Christ



Year of St Paul
June 2008 - June 2009

One of the gifts St Paul offers to the Church is his clear understanding of the vocation that belongs to every Christian.

Very often when we hear the word 'vocation' we tend to think of priests and nuns, but a vocation is quite simply a call.

And God calls us all. He calls us into life, through love. And love claims a response: in some deep part of our being we recognise that we are loved and that until in our turn we live lives of love we are somehow incomplete.

Our vocation - whatever our state in life - is to love. St Paul taught us this in the famous passage from his *First Letter to the Corinthians* which you will find in this leaflet.

During this week of prayer to mark the Year of Paul each one of us is invited to reflect on the Christian's vocation to love.

This leaflet contains readings and prayers to help us do that.

The vocation to love

St Paul reflects on the gifts he has received and on the greatest of them all - the gift of love.

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13

Where do you feel the lack of love in your own life? Where do you yourself fail to show love? Bring your answers to these questions before the Lord. Ask St Paul to pray for you.

For all the baptised

All Christian vocation derives from baptism. Baptism gives us our identity: indeed it makes us other Christs.

During the baptism of infants, parents and godparents are asked 'What do you ask of God's Church for your child?' The answers are often - Baptism, Faith, or to become a member of the Church.

Now you are older - no longer a little child. Ask yourself now the question 'What does God's Church ask of me?'

Read the following words of St. Paul. In prayer know that Paul speaks not only about 'us' but that in a particular way he speaks about you. 'God chose me, chose me in Christ...' Speak to St Paul, and to God about the feelings the passage evokes in you.

Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings of heaven in Christ. Before the world was made, God chose us, chose us in Christ to be holy and spotless, and to live through love in his presence, determining that we should become his adopted children, through Jesus Christ, for his own kind purposes; his free gift to us in the Beloved. And it is in him that we were claimed as God's own, chosen from the beginning.

Ephesians 1:3-14

Loving Father,
your plan for each of us is like a dream to be found in your heart.
You call us to life.
You call each of us to express
a particular aspect of your loving mind and heart.
In your call we find our name and our identity;
we recognise our freedom and uniqueness.
Father, help me to hear your voice.