

Diocese launches Marriage for Life campaign



JUST A THOUGHT

+ Peter F. Christensen

For this campaign, I would ask you to consider placing a decal on the back window of your car to support and proclaim your belief that marriage is for life.

On Oct. 22-23, the same weekend on which we celebrate the feast day of St. Pope John Paul II, the "Marriage and Family Life Pope," I would like to launch officially a new diocesan campaign called Marriage for Life. It is a car window decal and prayer campaign. The dual meaning of the decal is obvious - marriage is meant to be lived for the whole of life and for the purpose of having and raising children as is revealed in the book of Genesis, which speaks so beautifully of the original unity of man and woman and their call to bring forth new life.

For this campaign, I would ask you to consider placing a decal on the back window of your car to support and proclaim your belief that marriage is for life. Please share these decals with your friends, family and anyone of goodwill wishing to support the permanence and fruitfulness of marriage.

You might be asking: "Why a window decal campaign?" If you are like me, when I am stopped at a red light, I read and react to car bumper stickers and decals. You probably have your favorite car decals you have seen around town.

The Marriage for Life decal is a great way to send a positive message to your fellow travelers about what you believe. Pope Francis asks every Christian to go to the fringes and invite people with our witness. The pope's message is to go where the people are. I can't think of a better place than the street itself.

By placing a window decal on your car, you might generate thinking about the nature of marriage and its purposes. Someone might stop and ask you why you have that decal on your car. Or, you might see another car with the same sticker and honk or wave or give a big thumbs up. In our world of short attention spans, the quick message of a car decal is the perfect way to witness to others. An image does speak 1,000 words, and hopefully it will encourage and strengthen some hearts.

Many of you may know that before I became a priest, I worked as a professional graphic designer. The window decal itself depicts a couple who form the trunk of a tree, which shows their unity and difference. Sprouting from the branches of the tree are leaves which represent the children.

The tree is surrounded by surrounded by a golden heart, which represents the couple's love and Christ's love for them. The gold, silver and bronze colors which I have chosen symbolize the riches of marriage and how we should treasure them just as we would these precious metals if we were to possess them.

In addition to the window decal, I would ask you to take some time to reflect and pray the prayer that accompanies the window decal.

On Oct. 22-23, the Knights of Columbus will be distributing a limited number of these window decals along with a beautiful prayer and explanation of the symbol at the most attended Masses throughout our diocese. If you would like to support this campaign financially, please email marriageforlife@rcdb.org. We will send you some information about how to give to the Marriage for Life campaign. If you believe in the message of the Marriage for Life, your financial support would be greatly appreciated.

On this page, you see the explanation of the window decal and the accompanying prayer.




MARRIAGE FOR LIFE PRAYER

God of Blessing, God of Love,
in this lifelong covenant of marriage,
may we always be aware of your presence.
May our home be filled with the light and
goodness that comes from you.
May our marriage become the gift to the
world you intend it to be.
May our joy in each other be abundant
as your joy is abundant in us.
May our family reflect the image
of your absolute and unfailing love.
Through all trials and blessings of family life,
may we turn and surrender to you in every moment,
growing stronger in the faith, hope,
and love that binds us ever closer to you.
Grant that we may nurture in each other
grace and wisdom, rooted in you while daily growing
toward your heavenly kingdom.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.



The Marriage for Life symbol represents the permanence and fruitfulness of married life as an unbreakable bond

The **heart** represents love - the love of the couple, family and the love of Christ.

The **trunk** shows unity and complementarity of the couple in marriage.

The **limbs** express our need to let go and reach out to God with open arms.

The **leaves** represent children and new growth. Like leaves, children collect light and produce food for the whole tree.



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