

“The way of love has a name: it is Sacrifice”
St Josemaria Escriva,
The Forge # 768

The Mysteries of Marriage

Rosary Mediations for Marriages



THE MYSTERIES OF MARRIAGES

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THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES OF MARRIAGE

Instructions:

A lit candle, copies of the text on the Mysteries, dialogue books or writing paper and pens.

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (1 min)

(Leader may use this prayer or use own prayer)

Dear Lord,

Lord of the Holy Sacrifice, your saving oblation on the cross has given me new life. May I always recall your holy sacrifice on the cross and do it in remembrance of you. When tempted by selfishness, inspire me to be taken as an unworthy sacrifice. When burdened by envy, let me become an instrument of blessing for others. When afflicted by anger and pride, grant me the humility to be broken and given for others. When unsettled by anguish and troubled by worries, give me encouragement. This we ask for the sake of the betterment of our spousal relationship. AMEN

OBJECTIVE OF SESSION: (to be read out by the Leader) (1 min)

The purpose of this session is to meditate on The Joyful Mysteries. We find a common theme running through the Joyful Mysteries of Marriage. The theme of 'Sacrifice' must be evident because it is 'The way of Love' – St Jose Maria Escriva. In the Annunciation, we see the sacrifice of Mary in saying yes to the Incarnation of the Word in her womb without a full understanding of her 'Yes'.

THE FIRST JOYFUL MYSTERY – THE ANNUNCIATION

Scripture Reading on the Annunciation (5 mins)

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you." Mary said, 'You see before you the Lord's servant, let it happen to me as you have said.' And the angel left her.

Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.

Luke 1:35, 38, Mark 10:14

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Reflection

"Let it happen to me as you have said." With these words heaven was married to earth. Mary said, "I do", and conceived a Son by her spouse, the Holy Spirit, and the world has never been the same. Love manifests itself within marriage in the bringing forth of offspring. For those who cannot conceive children physically they are to manifest their love through spiritual offspring. When a couple is married, the Church asks them to promise to accept children lovingly from God and raise them according to the teachings of the Church. To which they agree without much thought yet a large majority of professed Catholic married couples employ the use of artificial contraception. Has that promise made on our wedding day turned into a lie and denial of God's will? Every human life brought forth changes the course of human history. If we keep our promise to God and His Church, it changes history for the good and furthers the Kingdom of God. If we do not keep our promise, we are living a lie and helping bring about the destruction of the Kingdom. Contraception has no place in our marriage. We promise to accept children willingly from God. Let it happen to us as you have said.

Pause a while before praying the Rosary

Pray the Decade of the Rosary (Additional clause ... of thy womb, Jesus who gives life to our marriage.) (5 mins)

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus who gives life to our marriage. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen"

5/5 on a dialogue question, spouses to share (10 mins)

Dialogue Question:

Share with your spouse how he/she has often 'given in' and said 'Yes' to me. How do I feel sharing this with you?

THE SECOND JOYFUL MYSTERY – THE VISITATION

Scripture Reading on the Visitation (5 mins)

Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could into the hill country to a town in Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now it happened that as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.'

A good wife is the best of portions, reserved for those who fear the Lord; rich or poor, their hearts will be glad, their faces cheerful, whatever the season.

Luke 1:39-42, Sirach 26:3-4

Reflection

We often see evangelization as something we do to our friends and neighbors but not our spouse. To truly love, honor, and obey we must bring Christ, like Mary, to our spouse. We must also, like Elizabeth, see Christ in our spouse. The Visitation gives a perfect example of how we should treat our husband or wife. First, we must always go like Mary "as quickly as she could" to meet their needs even before we are asked. Jesus came to serve and not to be served and we should adopt this attitude. Second, we should recognize Christ in our spouse. We should focus, no matter how difficult, on the fact that they too are created in the image and likeness of God. If we treat them with this type of respect, we will help them realize their value and worth as children of God.

Finally, we should rejoice in our spouse and magnify God for the wonderful gift that they are. We can rejoice in them by setting aside time to spend together on the couch, talking, walking or studying scripture. We can magnify the Lord by bringing Christ to them in prayer, for example, and spiritual growth. "In like manner also let wives be subject to their husbands: that if any believe not the word, they may be won without the word, by the conversation of the wives... Husbands, likewise dwelling with them according to knowledge, giving honour to the female as to the weaker vessel, and as to the co-heirs of the grace of life: that your prayers be not hindered."

Pause a while before praying the Rosary

Pray the Decade of the Rosary (Additional clause ... of thy womb, Jesus **who will bring conversion into our marriage.**) (5 mins)

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“Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus who will bring conversion into our marriage. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen”

5/5 on a dialogue question, spouses to share (10 mins)

Dialogue Question:

In what way(s) has my spouse brought Christ to me? How do I feel sharing this with you?

THE THIRD JOYFUL MYSTERY – THE NATIVITY

Scripture Reading on the Nativity (5 mins)

When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home.

And she gave birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.

Matt 1:24, Luke 2:7

Reflection

Mary was due to deliver her child at any time and either had to walk or ride a donkey. Joseph hadn't slept much lately and had been walking for miles only to find there was no room at the inn. Life has many unexpected and unforeseen experiences waiting around each and every corner. Strength and resolve is needed to keep a marriage together during these times of trial. Unexpected expenses, illness, loss of job or possessions, and special-needs children can stress and strain a marriage to the breaking point. When we feel those pressures, we must turn wholeheartedly to the example of the Holy Family. Even during the most trying times they followed God's will and were blessed richly for doing so. Joseph could have left Mary and the child that wasn't his but instead he chose to adopt. Mary could have gone back to Elizabeth's to give birth to her Son but she chose to stay by her husband's side. Joseph could have left Mary when he discovered Herod was coming for the child but he stayed and loved and protected them both. The Holy Family shows us that married life is not always easy but it is well worth the effort. What God has joined together let us not put asunder by our selfishness but instead let us adopt the selflessness of Mary and Joseph even in the most difficult situations.

Pause a while before praying the Rosary

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Pray the Decade of the Rosary (Additional clause ... of thy womb, Jesus **who is with us in the trying times of marriage.**) (5 mins)

“Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus who is with us in the trying times of marriage. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen”

5/5 on a dialogue question, spouses to share (10 mins)

Dialogue Question:

Describe a recent incident in our marriage when I have chosen to follow God’s will even though it was difficult for me. How does my answer make me feel?

THE FOURTH JOYFUL MYSTERY – THE PRESENTATION

Scripture Reading on The Presentation (5 mins)

And when the day came for them to be purified in keeping with the Law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, observing what is written in the Law of the Lord: Every first-born male must be consecrated to the Lord, and also to offer in sacrifice, in accordance with what is prescribed in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.

If she cannot afford a lamb, she must take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for the burnt offering and the other for the sacrifice for sin. The priest will perform the rite of expiation for her and she will be purified.

Luke 2:22-24, Leviticus 12:8

Reflection

The Presentation shows us the result of faithfulness to the laws of God by married people. Did the Mother of God and her husband need to fulfill the law? After all it does seem a bit redundant; offering God to God. For a married couple trying to follow the laws of God many things can appear to be pointless or redundant. However, we must see that God has blessings in store for us and others that can only come through our faithfulness to His commandments. Our daily observance of His commands will bring "light for revelation" to those around us. By following the example of Mary and Joseph and bringing all we have and placing it before God we show the world that our "eyes have seen the salvation" prepared for the world. Our faithfulness to God and each other shows those around us that God's design is for us to become

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"one flesh". The law of Moses calls for a lamb, a young pigeon, or a turtle dove. It also states that if the woman cannot afford a lamb she may bring two turtle doves or two pigeons. Mary and Joseph fulfilled the law to the greatest of their ability, as should we. They not only brought the two birds they also brought the Lamb.

Lord, help us to offer to you our marriage. Help us to be faithful to your commands and to each other and in doing so lead others closer to you.

Pause a while before praying the Rosary

Pray the Decade of the Rosary (Additional clause: ...of thy womb, Jesus, **who has purified our marriage with His blood.**) (5 mins)

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus who has purified our marriage with His Blood. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen"

5/5 on a dialogue question, spouses to share (10 mins)

Dialogue Question:

Share with your spouse an occasion where together you have been a source of strength and encouragement to others and hence to Christ in others. How does my answer make me feel?

THE FIFTH JOYFUL MYSTERY – THE FINDING IN THE TEMPLE

Scripture Reading on The Finding in The Temple (5mins)

They were overcome when they saw him, and his mother said to him, 'My child, why have you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been, looking for you.' He replied, 'Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' But they did not understand what he meant. He went down with them then and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority. His mother stored up all these things in her heart.

How blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways! Your wife a fruitful vine in the inner places of your house. Your children round your table like shoots of an olive tree.

Luke 2:48-51, Psalm 128:1,3

Reflection

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The finding in the Temple is a culminating lesson on the need for strong, faithful, loving husbands to make marriage work. Joseph suffered so much physically in protecting and providing for Mary and her Son. Here at the Temple, he suffers emotionally. The boy, who he knows is not his own, asks a question that pierces Joseph's heart, "Did you not know, that I must be about my Father's business?" Many of today's men are spiritually weak. Joseph's example says to us married men, "fear not, only believe". Joseph shows how to deal with every situation in marriage from infidelity to children to work. Joseph never says one word but like a perfect follower of Christ his example says more than a few verses could ever say. Joseph endured all things, sacrificed all self-desires, and placed himself at the service of Mary and Jesus. If we husbands will follow his example our wives will take and keep these things in their hearts and our children will become lovingly obedient to us.

Pause a while before praying the Rosary

Pray the Decade of the Rosary (Additional clause: ...of thy womb, Jesus, **who strengthens husbands who are faithful.**) (5 mins)

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus who strengthens husbands who are faithful. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

5/5 on a dialogue question, spouses to share. (10 mins)

Dialogue Question:

In which area can I take action to improve the relationship with my spouse and/or my family?
How do I feel sharing this with you?

OPEN SHARING on a chosen 5/5 Dialogue Question (15 mins)

ANNOUNCEMENTS & NEXT MEETING (5 mins)

Make the announcements about the ME Community, if any, and also about the Love Circle. Check with the group about the next meeting – date, time, venue and program topic.

CLOSING PRAYER (2 mins)

Leader can invite the host or anyone else to say the closing prayer or a Marian song, giving thanks to God for the gift of time and sharing for the evening. Remember to pray for any

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couples in the group in need of prayers, for the ME community and for the growth of their Love Circle in this journey of LOVE.

SONG (Optional)

The ME song, "There's a new world somewhere." or any suitable song/hymn.

- End of Session -

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THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES OF MARRIAGE

Instructions:

A lit candle, copies of the text on the Mysteries, dialogue books or writing paper and pens.

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (1 min)

(Leader or host couple to lead in prayer)

OBJECTIVE OF SESSION: (to be read out by the Leader) (1 min)

The purpose of this session is to meditate on The Glorious Mysteries. The Glorious Mysteries remind us of our own glorious destiny to eternal life which Jesus has ransomed with his blood. What is our response to Jesus' invitation to share in His glory?

THE FIRST GLORIOUS MYSTERY – THE RESURRECTION

Scripture Reading on the Resurrection (5 mins)

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, "Peace be with you", and after this he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy at seeing the Lord.

You are not your own property, then; you have been bought at a price. So use your body for the glory of God.

John 20:19-20, 1 Corinthians 6:20

Reflection

St. Paul tells us that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. We are to respect our own bodies as well as the body of our spouse. The Resurrection reminds us that the body we possess now is the one we will have forever. Many times, we get caught up in the fanciful notion that we will spend eternity as shapeless free-floating spirits. The Resurrection teaches us that this is not true and that one-day we will be reunited with our bodies.

If our body and soul are so closely connected it is only fitting that we heed St. Paul's advice. "So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife, love himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourish and cherish it, as also Christ does the Church." As

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a married couple, we are one body, one flesh. Let us therefore love and respect each other's bodies in a way that glorifies and gives honour to God. Let us also use our bodies in this life to sanctify each other and bring each other that much closer to a resurrection into eternal life. "The wife has no power of her own body, but the husband. And in like manner the husband also has no power of his own body, but the wife."

Pause a while before praying the Rosary

Pray the Decade of the Rosary (Additional clause ... of thy womb, Jesus **who will call us to the resurrection of the body.**) (5 mins)

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus who will call us to the resurrection of the body. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen"

5/5 on a dialogue question, spouses to share (10 mins)

Dialogue Question:

How have I treated my body to sanctify in a way that sanctifies each other? How do I feel sharing this with you?

THE SECOND GLORIOUS MYSTERY – THE ASCENSION

Scripture Reading on The Ascension (5 mins)

But you will receive the power of the Holy Spirit which will come on you, and then you will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to earth's remotest end.

Gates, lift high your heads, raise high the ancient gateways, and the king of glory shall enter! Who is he, this king of glory? The Lord of Hosts, he is the king of glory.

Acts of the Apostles 1:8-9, Psalm 24:9-10

Reflection

A common cause of stress and even resentment within marriage is spirituality. Many times, one spouse grows spiritually with leaps and bounds while the other's growth seems stagnant or even non-existent. Because they are no longer two but one, uneven growth can strain the

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relationship. God has designed marriage in such a way that spiritual growth is to be complementing and continuous between a husband and wife. We are to encourage one another. If one advances in the spiritual life more than the other this should not be a source of resentment. Like a taller plant beside a shorter one it should challenge and encourage the smaller one to reach higher.

We are to await the Lord together. We must help each other be ready for when He comes again. Our job as a faithful loving spouse is to challenge and encourage our beloved in the spiritual life so that when Christ returns He will find us both ready to greet Him. "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife; and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband...

Pause a while before praying the Rosary

Pray the Decade of the Rosary (Additional clause ... of thy womb, Jesus **who will return in the same way He left.**) (5 mins)

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus who will return in the same way He left. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen"

5/5 on a dialogue question, spouses to share (10 mins)

Dialogue Question:

How have I encouraged my spouse to live a more spiritual life? How do I feel sharing this with you?

THE THIRD GLORIOUS MYSTERY – THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Scripture Reading on The Descent of the Holy Spirit (5 mins)

When Pentecost day came around, they had all met together, when suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of a violent wind which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and there appeared to them tongues as of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the holy spirit and began to speak different languages as the spirit gave them power to express themselves.

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Acts of the Apostles 2:1-4

Reflection

Prayer is the life and breath of the soul. Prayer is also the life and breath of a marriage. As Fr. Peyton always stated, "The family that prays together, stays together". Christ taught us that, "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."* When a married couple comes together in prayer Jesus is in their midst. To pray together as husband and wife is to call upon the power of God. It is in essence a miniature Pentecost. Our prayer as one spirit, one body, one mind, makes us imitators of the Trinity.

Let us therefore gather often in our upper room, living room, or bedroom for fervent prayer. Let us allow ourselves to be filled with the Holy Spirit so that we may preach the Gospel through word and deed to our family, friends and neighbours. The Holy Spirit comes forth as the fruit of our prayer empowering and renewing our marriage. He proceeds from the Father and the Son, from the husband and the wife, by the husband and the wife He is worshipped and glorified. "But you will receive the power of the Holy Spirit which will come on you, and then you will be witnesses not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judaea and Samaria, and indeed to earth's remotest end.

Pause a while before praying the Rosary

Pray the Decade of the Rosary (Additional clause ... of thy womb, Jesus who sends forth His Spirit upon our marriage.) (5 mins)

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus who sends forth His Spirit upon our marriage. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen"

5/5 on a dialogue question, spouses to share (10 mins)

Dialogue Question:

Recall a time when we prayed in unity and felt empowered by the Holy Spirit to share His gifts. How do I feel sharing this with you?

THE FOURTH GLORIOUS MYSTERY – THE ASSUMPTION OF MARY

Scripture Reading on The Assumption of Mary (5 mins)

Then the sanctuary of God in heaven opened and the ark of the covenant could be seen inside it. Then came flashes of lightning peals of thunder and an earthquake and violet hail. Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman robed with the sun, standing on the moon, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. But she was given a pair of the great eagle's wings to fly from the serpent into the desert, to the place where she was to be looked after for a time, two times and half a time.

By doing all this with your own hand you have deserved well of Israel and God has approved what you have done. May you be blessed by the Lord Almighty in all the days to come. And the people all said "Amen"

Revelation 11:19, 12:1,14 Judith 15:10

Reflection

Like Mary there is no way for us to draw closer to God by our own power. It is God's grace that leads us or rather pulls us to Himself. This is why St. Augustine says, "Our hearts are restless until they rest in you O Lord". Likewise, our marriage is restless until it rests in the Lord. Our marriage cannot achieve the sanctity for which it is designed on its own power. Married life cannot ascend to the lofty yet reachable ideals of marriage by anything we do except insofar as we cooperate with grace. Only through this cooperation can our marriage be taken higher and it can be "assumed" to the heights prepared by God for those in matrimonial bonds.

By following the humility and example of the Blessed Mother we will begin to cooperate with God's grace. His grace will draw us closer to each other and to Himself. "You have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they rest in you O Lord."

Pause a while before praying the Rosary

Pray the Decade of the Rosary (Additional clause ... of thy womb, Jesus who draws us, like Mary, to Himself.) (5 mins)

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"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus who draws us, like Mary, to himself. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen"

5/5 on a dialogue question, spouses to share (10 mins)

Dialogue Question:

Recollect an occasion when I made the decision to love because I wanted to grow in intimacy with you. How do I feel sharing this with you?

THE FIFTH GLORIOUS MYSTERY – THE CORONATION OF MARY

Scripture Reading on The Coronation of Mary (5 mins)

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: A woman robed with the sun, standing on the moon, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.

Clothed in brocade, the king's daughter is led within to the king with the maidens of her retinue; her companions are brought to her, they enter the king's palace with joy and rejoicing.

Revelation 12:1, Psalm 45:13-15

Reflection

The picture of the heavenly court, completed by the crowning of the Queen, is a picture of a perfect heavenly marriage. The King and Queen, Jesus and Mary, look down upon their home, the kingdom, and their children. This is a look of concern and care not of power and control. True authority and power comes from the willingness to serve. The husband and wife too look with care and concern upon their home, future, and their children. Mary gives the perfect example of a loving wife. She is subordinate to Jesus who is the head of their "home". She trusts in His strength, power, and justice. Likewise, a wife should be obedient to her husband, not in a servile way but in a childlike self-abandoning way. Mary also intercedes for others, pleads for mercy, and requests favours from Jesus. A wife too may speak to her husband for her children or others. She may also plead for mercy for those around her and request favours and blessings

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from her husband. In similar fashion the husband is to imitate Christ. For as St. Paul says, "husbands love your wives as Christ loved the Church". Jesus loved His bride, the Church, so much that He took her place on the cross. He died for His bride so that she might have eternal life.

Let us strengthen our marriage by looking to the example of Jesus and Mary. Let us seek to imitate them by serving each other and our family. Mary, Queen of our marriage, pray for us.

Pause a while before praying the Rosary

Pray the Decade of the Rosary (Additional clause ... of thy womb, Jesus who is King of our marriage and home.) (5 mins)

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus who is King of our marriage and home. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen"

5/5 on a dialogue question, spouses to share (10 mins)

Dialogue Question:

How have we, as parents, been life-giving to our children? How do I feel about my answer?

OPEN SHARING on a chosen 5/5 Dialogue Question (15 mins)

ANNOUNCEMENTS & NEXT MEETING (5 mins)

Make the announcements about the ME Community, if any, and also about the Love Circle. Check with the group about the next meeting – date, time, venue and program topic.

CLOSING PRAYER (2 mins)

Leader can invite the host or anyone else to say the closing prayer or a Marian song, giving thanks to God for the gift of time and sharing for the evening. Remember to pray for any

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couples in the group in need of prayers, for the ME community and for the growth of their Love Circle in this journey of LOVE.

SONG (Optional)

- the ME song, "There's a new world somewhere." or any suitable song/hymn.

- End of Session -

THE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES OF MARRIAGE

Instructions:

A lit candle, copies of the text on the Mysteries, dialogue books or writing paper and pens.

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (1 min)

(Leader may use this prayer or use own prayer)

Dear Lord,

Lord of the Holy Sacrifice, your saving oblation on the cross has given me new life. May I always recall your holy sacrifice on the cross and do it in remembrance of you. When tempted by selfishness, inspire me to be taken as an unworthy sacrifice. When burdened by envy, let me become an instrument of blessing for others. When afflicted by anger and pride, grant me the humility to be broken and given for others. When unsettled by anguish and troubled by worries, give me encouragement. This we ask for the sake of the betterment of our spousal relationship. AMEN

OBJECTIVE OF SESSION: (to be read out by the Leader) (1 min)

The purpose of this session is to meditate on The Sorrowful Mysteries. The theme running through the Sorrowful Mysteries of Marriage is the theme of 'Faith'. Faith is the source of the strength, courage, honour, salvation and hope called for in The Sorrowful Mysteries of Marriage. For example, in the Agony in the Garden, we see the faith of Jesus in submitting himself to the will of God even though it was very difficult for him to do so. By his faith, he managed to gain the strength to receive his cup of suffering.

THE FIRST SORROWFUL MYSTERY – THE AGONY IN THE GARDEN

Scripture Reading on the Agony in the Garden (5 mins)

Then he withdrew from them, about a stone's throw away, and knelt down and prayed. 'Father,' he said, 'if you are willing, take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, let your will be done, not mine.' Then an angel appeared to him, coming from heaven to give him strength. In his anguish, he prayed even more earnestly, and his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood.

Well then! Make peace with him, be reconciled, and all your happiness will be restored to you.

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Luke 22:41-44, Job 22:21

Reflection

So many things can cause agony within marriage. We can be in agony with our spouse or because of our spouse. Differing views on finance, children, and the future can cause agonizing times of cold silence or heated arguments. Different faith backgrounds and different views on sex within the context of marriage can be the cause of tremendous stress and agony. The loss of a job or legal problems can cause agony in marriage seemingly to the point of sweating blood.

When we say, "I do", to each other we say, "your will, not mine", to God. If we are accepting of our cup of sufferings within marriage God will send His angel to minister to us. This angel may be in the form of a counsellor, new job, sound advice from a friend, or just an ear that will listen. Nevertheless, God asks us to accept His will for our marriage.

When we are in agony within our marriage, let us heed the words of Christ and in doing so be strengthened to accept the cup, "Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh weak.

Pause a while before praying the Rosary

Pray the Decade of the Rosary (Additional clause ... of thy womb, Jesus, **who is in agony for our marriage.**) (5 mins)

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus who is in agony for our marriage. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen"

5/5 on a dialogue question, spouses to share. (10 mins)

Dialogue Question:

Share with your spouse how you managed to submit yourself to the will of God and gained strength during a difficult time in your life. How do I feel sharing this with you?

THE SECOND SORROWFUL MYSTERY – THE SCOURGING AT THE PILLAR

Scripture Reading on The Scourging at the Pillar (5 mins)

Then Pilate saw that he was making no impression, that in fact a riot was imminent. So he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd and said, 'I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your concern.' And the people, every one of them, shouted back, 'Let his blood be on us and on our children!' Then he released Barabbas for them. After having Jesus scourged he handed him over to be crucified.

In the same way, husbands must love their wives as they love their own bodies; for a man to love his wife is for him to love himself. A man never hates his own body, but he feeds it and looks after it; and that is the way Christ treats the Church,

Matt 27:24-26, Ephesians 5:28-29

Reflection

Jesus also suffered the scourging at the pillar for abuse within marriage. Many marriages today are stricken with abuse. It can be subtle and sometimes unseen even by those who are being abused. It can also be obvious and brutal, visibly noticed by the outside world. Many men and women suffer from emotional abuse from a spouse who toys with feelings and emotions as a form of control. Others suffer spiritual abuse when a spouse ridicules and belittles them because of their faith. Some spouses suffer from sexual abuse ranging from immoral sex acts to rape. Many men and women suffer from terrible physical abuse at the hands of their spouse.

Jesus took these abuses upon Himself at the scourging. He also gave us a courageous example by quietly enduring His suffering and praying for His abusers. Anyone in an abusive relationship should seek help immediately. It can only be remedied by outside assistance possibly from a priest, minister, or counsellor.

Most importantly though, help should be sought through prayer for as St. Paul says, "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and power, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places."

Pause a while before praying the Rosary

Pray the Decade of the Rosary (Additional clause ... of thy womb, Jesus, **who was scourged for our offenses.**) (5 mins)

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“Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus who was scourged for our offenses. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen”

5/5 on a dialogue question, spouses to share. (10 mins)

Dialogue Question:

Share how you have grown in faith and character after a period of suffering? How do I feel sharing this with you?

THE THIRD SORROWFUL MYSTERY – THE CROWNING WITH THORNS

Scripture Reading on the Crowning with Thorns (5 mins)

And after this, the soldiers twisted some thorns into a crown and put it on his head and dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him and saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' and slapping him in the face.

This is why a man leaves his father and mother and becomes attached to his wife, and the two become one flesh.

John 19:2-3, Ephesians 5:31

Reflection

How many times have we heard wedding vows repeated? We may even be able to repeat our own vows from memory. Yet, how many of us consciously try to stick closely and apply ourselves to the vows we've made? Are we seeking to love our spouse when we do not treat him or her as a beautiful gift given to us by God? We are told to love our neighbours as ourselves. What closer neighbour is there than the one beside us in our bed? Yet, many times we go to bed angry and without speaking. Are we seeking to honor our spouse when we speak unkind words about them to our friends and family? To honor each other means to hold our spouse in high esteem. This may be difficult in some situations. However, if we keep our negative thoughts and feelings to ourselves and pray to overcome them we will honor our spouse. We honor each other by placing our husband or wife's needs before our own.

Jesus wore the crown of thorns that we deserve for our not keeping true to our marriage vows. The crown was pushed into his head for our sins of commission as well as omission. Let us strive to love, honor, and obey our spouse from this day forward.

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Pause a while before praying the Rosary

Pray the Decade of the Rosary (Additional clause ... of thy womb, Jesus, who was crowned with thorns.) (5 mins)

“Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus who was crowned with thorns. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen”

5/5 on a dialogue question, spouses to share. (10 mins)

Dialogue Question:

What are the things that I can do to lessen your pain and hurt ? How do I feel sharing this with you?

THE FORTH SORROWUL MYSTERY – THE CARRYING OF THE CROSS

Scripture Reading on the Carrying of the Cross (5 mins)

So, at that Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. They then took charge of Jesus and carrying his own cross he went out to the Place of the Skull or, as it is called in Hebrew, Golgotha,

The message of the cross is folly for those who are on the way to ruin, but for those of us who are on the road to salvation it is the power of God.

John 19:16-17, 1 Corinthians 1:18

Reflection

To those without faith the cross can appear as a condemnation. They ask, "why not just put it down and move on"? They do not realize that it is not condemnation but our salvation to pick up that cross daily and follow Him. At the altar we promised to love our spouse in the good

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times and through the bad. In sickness and in health, for rich or for poor until death do us part. According to God's plan seemingly bad things happen to good people. God often gives us an extremely heavy cross to bear and that cross can sometimes be our spouse. A permanent physical disability can make one spouse completely dependent on the other. Sickness and disease can require life-long care. Mental disorders can make a spouse almost unlovable. It is during these times, whether they be one year or one hundred years, that we must fully conform ourselves to Christ. When our spouse is the cross we bear daily we must embrace that cross lovingly and wholeheartedly. Jesus died for His spouse, the Church. He chose not His own desires but the wellbeing and joy of His spouse.

The spouse that feels he or she is a cross must not see themselves as a condemnation but rather an instrument of salvation. God uses all things for good for those who love Him and we are all Christ and cross to each other. The perfect picture of married life is the crucifix. Love married to sacrifice. Suffering for the sake of another. The cross is useless without Christ and there is no sacrifice for Christ without the cross.

Let us therefore die to our own wants and desires so that we may better love and care for our spouse. We have made vows to do this before God and His Church. Let us resolve to keep these vows no matter how many times we may fall under the weight of our cross. Let us stand once again and continue our journey together towards the kingdom.

Pause a while before praying the Rosary

Pray the Decade of the Rosary (Additional clause ... of thy womb, Jesus, **who carries the cross before us.**) (5 mins)

“Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus who carries the cross before us. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen”

5/5 on a dialogue question, spouses to share. (10 mins)

Dialogue Question:

How do I feel when I am at my most unlovable self and yet you chose to love me? How do I feel sharing this with you?

THE FIFTH SORROWFUL MYSTERY – THE CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH

Scripture Reading on the Crucifixion and Death (5 mins)

Seeing his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother, 'Woman, this is your son'. Then to the disciple he said, 'This is your mother'. And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. After Jesus had taken the wine he said, 'It is fulfilled'; and bowing his head he gave up his spirit.

But the mother was especially admirable and worthy of honourable remembrance, for she watched the death of seven sons in the course of a single day, and bravely endured it because of her hopes in the Lord. Indeed she encouraged each of them in their ancestral tongue; filled with noble conviction, she reinforced her womanly argument with manly courage, saying to them, 'I do not know how you appeared in my womb; it was not I who endowed you with breath and life, I had not the shaping of your every part. And hence, the Creator of the world, who made everyone and ordained the origin of all things, will in his mercy give you back breath and life, since for the sake of his laws you have no concern for yourselves.'

John 19:26-27, 30, 2 Maccabees 7: 21,23

Reflection

Till death do us part. It is not something we think about or look forward to. It is like an add-on or legal disclaimer at the bottom of the page we would rather not discuss. Death comes to us all. The loss of a spouse can be a devastating event in one's life regardless of the amount of time married. Like those followers gathered at the foot of the cross, many feelings and emotions come to the surface: sorrow for our loss; anger, because we somehow feel cheated; guilt, from not saying or doing something when we had the chance; fear of the future alone; so many feelings and emotions to deal with not to mention funeral arrangements, insurance, and more.

It is at this time when we must turn to the Mother of Sorrows for comfort. Like John, we must take her into our own home. We must sit with her and share our sorrows and fears. She understands. She has experienced loss. She will give us strength, encouragement, and hope. She will stand with us at the cross and guide us to the empty tomb. "I will deliver them out of

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the hand of death. I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy death; O hell, I will be thy bite..."

Pause a while before praying the Rosary

Pray the Decade of the Rosary (Additional clause ... of thy womb, Jesus, who gave us His Mother to comfort us.) (5 mins)

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus who gave us His Mother to comfort us. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen"

5/5 on a dialogue question, spouses to share. (10 mins)

Dialogue Question:

How do I feel about death? Have I loved you enough to have no regrets if I were to be called to rest tomorrow? How do I feel sharing this with you?

OPEN SHARING on a chosen 5/5 Dialogue Question (15 mins)

ANNOUNCEMENTS & NEXT MEETING (5 mins)

Make the announcements about the ME Community, if any, and also about the Love Circle. Check with the group about the next meeting – date, time, venue and program topic.

CLOSING PRAYER (2 mins)

Leader can invite the host or anyone else to say the closing prayer or a Marian song, giving thanks to God for the gift of time and sharing for the evening. Remember to pray for any couples in the group in need of prayers, for the ME community and for the growth of their Love Circle in this journey of LOVE.

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SONG (Optional)

- the ME song, "There's a new world somewhere." or any suitable song/hymn.

- End of Session -

THE LUMINOUS MYSTERIES OF MARRIAGE

Instructions:

A lit candle, copies of the text on the Mysteries, dialogue books or writing paper and pens.

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER (1 min)

(Leader may use this prayer or use own prayer)

Dear Lord,

Lord of the Holy Sacrifice, your saving oblation on the cross has given me new life. May I always recall your holy sacrifice on the cross and do it in remembrance of you. When tempted by selfishness, inspire me to be taken as an unworthy sacrifice. When burdened by envy, let me become an instrument of blessing for others. When afflicted by anger and pride, grant me the humility to be broken and given for others. When unsettled by anguish and troubled by worries, give me encouragement. This we ask for the sake of the betterment of our spousal relationship. AMEN

OBJECTIVE OF SESSION: (to be read out by the Leader) (1 min)

The purpose of this session is to meditate on The Luminous Mysteries in relation to marriage. We are called to reflect that God is central to our relationship. He intended for man and woman to be ONE in marriage. God's grace continues to be with us in our marriage, reminding us to be a pillar of strength and shelter to our spouse especially during difficult times. This calls for the decision to love. God's presence in our marital journey helps us to be life-giving to each other and also as a beacon to others.

THE FIRST LUMINOUS MYSTERY – THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

Scripture Reading on The Baptism of Jesus (5 mins)

I did not know him myself, but he who sent me to baptise with water had said to me, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is to baptise with the Holy Spirit." I have seen and I testify that he is the Chosen One of God.'

Jesus replied: In all truth I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born through water and the Spirit.

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John 2:33-34, 3:5

Reflection

A wedding ring is a symbol of the love between husband and wife. It is also a symbol of the love of God. This love, like the ring, has no end. It is also a symbol of a new creation. When the husband and wife wear their wedding rings they give witness to the world that they are a new creation. The two have become one and one ring cannot be seen without giving thought to the other.

An act that is almost completely hidden and unseen in the wedding ceremony is the blessing of the rings. The priest blesses the rings with water thereby blessing them and the sacrament which they represent. The rings also symbolises death and rebirth; the death of two individuals and the rebirth of one creature ordained by God to "be fruitful and multiply". Without Christ and the Holy Spirit, the marriage ceremony is merely symbolic like the baptism of John with no effectual grace. However, when Christ and the Holy Spirit are present in the marriage ceremony, we see Christ in the new creation of "one flesh" and the Holy Spirit descending and blessing of the man and woman. Let us be mindful of not only our baptismal vows each time we bless ourselves with Holy Water but let us also be mindful of our wedding vows.

Pause a while before praying the Rosary

Pray the Decade of the Rosary (Additional clause ... of thy womb, Jesus, **who was baptised by John.**) (5 mins)

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus who was baptised by John. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen"

5/5 on a dialogue question, spouses to share. (10 mins)

Dialogue Question:

Share with your spouse how you felt as you placed the ring on his/her finger on your wedding day. How do I feel sharing this with you now?

THE SECOND LUMINOUS MYSTERY – THE WEDDING AT CANA

Scripture Reading on The Wedding at Cana (5 mins)

On the third day, there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee. The mother of Jesus was there.

The Lord God said, 'It is not right that the man should be alone. I shall make him a helper. This is why a man leaves his father and mother and becomes attached to his wife, and they become one flesh.'

John 2:1, Genesis 2:18, 24

Reflection

Here in John's Gospel we find Jesus at a wedding in Cana. Our meditation could simply end here by saying that Jesus needs to be present in our marriage in order for it to be fruitful. However, God calls us much deeper into the beauty of marriage in this mystery.

The Gospel of John in many ways is a parallel to Genesis and other Old Testament books. Both Genesis and John begin in the same manner reminding us that God created everything including marriage. Marriage has been a sacred event ordained by God since the beginning. God sanctified marriage by being a witness of the first wedding and now begins His earthly ministry at this marriage in Cana. The mystery of marriage is as deep as the mystery of God's power. God commands husband and wife to be fruitful and multiply. To be married is sacred because it is to share on this earth a power with God to create. Husband and wife are given a power no other creature possesses. They have the power to co-create an immortal being. With the help of God, married men and women create beings made in the image and likeness of God. They help create beings that find they had a beginning but their existence will have no end. Only God can create but he allows us to help. He allows us to fill the jars.

Pause a while before praying the Rosary

Pray the Decade of the Rosary (Additional clause ... of thy womb, Jesus, **who changed water into wine.**) (5 mins)

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus who changed water into wine. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen"

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5/5 on a dialogue question, spouses to share. (10 mins)

Dialogue Question:

What are my feelings about having children? How does/did having children change our relationship? How do I feel sharing this with you?

THE THIRD LUMINOUS MYSTERY – THE PROCLAMATION OF THE KINGDOM

Scripture Reading on The Proclamation of the Kingdom (5 mins)

After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the gospel from God saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the gospel'.

For it is not against human enemies that we have to struggle, but against the principalities and the ruling forces who are masters of the darkness in this world, the spirits of evil in the heavens. 13. That is why you must take up all God's armour, or you will not be able to put up any resistance on the evil day, or stand your ground even though you exert yourselves to the full.

Mark 1:14-15, Ephesians 6:12-13

Reflection

When Jesus started His ministry, He began with these words, "Do penance, for the kingdom of God is at hand. The Kingdom of God is here now. It is at hand right in front of us. Christ opened the gates and every moment battles are taking place to further advance the front line and expand the Kingdom.

Even though we may be at a distant outpost on the forefront of newly taken territory we are still in the Kingdom. How far the Kingdom advances depends a great deal on how we live our lives especially in the context of our marriage. We can apply all of the Beatitudes to our married life but none more readily than the teaching on adultery. Adultery does not necessarily need to be physical. As Jesus teaches, even lusting is adultery. In fact, this is how infidelity most often starts, through the eye and into the mind affecting the body. That is why Christ follows this teaching directly with teachings on removing the eye or any other body part that may lead us into scandal. We, as a married couple, can be a powerful force in the battle for the Kingdom.

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Is it any wonder that Satan would attack marriage so vigorously? Prayerful married people not only fight tremendous battles for the Kingdom but also support and carry each other when wounded. Married couples are also the source and trainers of future warriors. For this reason, Satan tries to lay waste to families. The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, be healed, and do battle.

Pause a while before praying the Rosary

Pray the Decade of the Rosary (Additional clause ... of thy womb, Jesus, **who calls us to do Battle for the Kingdom.**) (5 mins)

“Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus who calls us to do Battle for the Kingdom. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen”

5/5 on a dialogue question, spouses to share (10 mins)

Dialogue Question:

Has our couple love been like a lamp that shines in the dark or is it just a flickering flame? How can we do better? What are my feelings as I reflect on this?

THE FOURTH LUMINOUS MYSTERY – THE TRANSFIGURATION

Scripture Reading on The Proclamation of the Kingdom (5 mins)

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There in their presence he was transfigured: his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as dazzling as light. And suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them; they were talking with him. Then Peter spoke to Jesus. 'Lord,' he said, 'it is wonderful for us to be here; if you want me to, I will make three shelters here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.

The Lord said to Moses, 'Come up to me on the mountain. Stay there, and I will give you the stone tablets -- the law and the commandment -- which I have written for their instruction. To the watching Israelites, the glory of the Lord looked like a devouring fire on the mountain top.

Matthew 17:1-4, Exodus 24:12a, 17

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Reflection

Peter, James, and John followed reluctantly. Their legs began to ache at the sight of the mountain. They may have been thinking of ways to stop or divert Jesus. From a distance the mountain appeared insurmountable. As they approached the mountain it appeared to grow larger and as they began their ascent the air grew thinner, their bodies seemed to become heavier, and their legs weaker. Married couples can easily associate with the feelings of these three men following Christ. Problems that arise in marriage can appear insurmountable only to become even more difficult when the problem is in their midst. These mountains can include children, finances, infidelity, change of jobs, death in the family, and many, many more. The only way a married couple can climb and conquer these mountains is by staying together and by following Jesus. If we continue our journey, no matter how difficult, we will arrive at the top, look at where we have been and say, like Peter, "it is good for us to be here". We may also find that our spouse and in fact our marriage has been transfigured by the experience and is glowing with the radiance of God.

Pause a while before praying the Rosary

Pray the Decade of the Rosary (Additional clause ... of thy womb, Jesus, **who asks us to follow Him up the mountain.**) (5 mins)

"Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus who asks us to follow Him up the mountain. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen"

5/5 on a dialogue question, spouses to share (10 mins)

Dialogue Question:

We can be so set in our ways that to change means very often moving out of our comfort zones. We often question – "Why must I change?" Why can't you change?" Reflect on one area of concern you find difficult to change. Share the feelings you have on this.

THE FIFTH LUMINOUS MYSTERY – THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST

Scripture Reading on The Proclamation of the Kingdom (5 mins)

I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world.

Husbands should love their wives, just as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her to make her holy by washing her in cleansing water with a form of words, so that when he took the Church to himself she would be glorious, with no speck or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and faultless.

John 6:51, Ephesians 5:25-27

Reflection

During the Last Supper, we find Christ offering Himself to His followers. Christ gives Himself freely saying, "this is my body". It is truly His flesh. It is the entire sacrifice of Christ in an unbloody manner like the sacrifice of the Mass. Through study of the Scriptures and the understanding of the early church fathers we understand that the Last Supper, the sacrifice on Calvary, and the wedding feast of the Lamb mentioned in the book of Revelation are all one in the same. Like the Trinity, three distinct and equal parts yet all of them the exact same event, the exact same sacrifice.

The renewal of the marriage covenant at the marriage bed is a parallel to this event. Christ gave His flesh to His bride the Church, and continues to do so for the life of the world. Likewise, the husband gives his flesh to his bride, his wife, and continues to do so for the life of the marriage and the family. Like the Church, the wife, receives her husband and gives new life to her family.

Jesus gave himself completely without reserve or selfishness and the Church receives him willingly, lovingly, and brings forth new life abundantly. Our marriage should imitate this heavenly marriage. Total self-giving and an openness to life are the marks of a sanctifying marriage.

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Pause a while before praying the Rosary

Pray the Decade of the Rosary (Additional clause ... of thy womb, Jesus, who gives us His flesh in the Eucharist.) (5 mins)

“Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus who gives us His flesh in the Eucharist. Holy Mary, Mother of God, Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen”

5/5 on a dialogue question, spouses to share (10 mins)

Dialogue Question:

Recall your wedding day. Describe in loving details what you can remember as significant to you. If your wedding day is to be reported in the church newspaper or bulletin, give it a suitable heading. How does your answer make you feel?

OPEN SHARING on a chosen 5/5 Dialogue Question (15 mins)

ANNOUNCEMENTS & NEXT MEETING (5 mins)

Make the announcements about the ME Community, if any, and also about the Love Circle. Check with the group about the next meeting – date, time, venue and program topic.

CLOSING PRAYER (2 mins)

Leader can invite the host or anyone else to say the closing prayer or a Marian song, giving thanks to God for the gift of time and sharing for the evening. Remember to pray for any couples in the group in need of prayers, for the ME community and for the growth of their Love Circle in this journey of LOVE.

SONG (Optional)

The ME song, “There’s a new world somewhere.” or any suitable song/hymn.

- End of Session -