

PARENTS FIRST

Monthly bulletin for Parents of Southridge School



Blessing of the Crucifix

For some time now, we have been wanting to place a Crucifix in our Chapel. It is a common and basic symbol of our faith that has been lacking for years. Inspired by St. Josemaria Escriva, we wanted in this crucifix to see Christ's face - to be able to look at that image of Christ, suffering --- for you, for me, for everyone --- but full of peace.

In *laetitia, nulla dies sine cruce!*, "In joy, not a day without the Cross!" It is an aspiration St. Josemaria would use to encourage himself "to carry the Lord's burden with generosity, always with good humor, though often it means going against the grain" (*Letter, 2 Feb 1945, noted in Vasquez de Prada, The Founder of Opus Dei, Vol. 2, p.454*). True, profound happiness is not attained by running away from suffering. It is by learning to embrace it whole heartedly, that we discover something deeper about ourselves and about God.

Even in those brief moments of encounter with our Lord on the cross, we will not remain unmoved from his calls of union, of faithfulness to His will. May we become men and women of prayer who grow in love with the Eucharist. As we continuously strive to understand the mystery of God's love, it leads us to see the connection between the cross and the Eucharist. In them are contained the keys that unlock mystery of God's surpassing love for us.

Never grow tired of seeking Christ's face. It is the secret to a joyous faith.





DAY 1

by Robert and Matet Sarile
Grade 11 Head Parent Coordinators

When we were young, we always had that dream of finding the “right one”, to spend the rest of our lives together with. We loved the idea of “happily ever after”, thinking that it would be very easy as long as you marry the “right one”. On our wedding days, we all thought that everything was about the flowers, the cake, the champagne and the vows, hoping and praying that everything would go well. Little did we know that a good marriage is more than just the wedding/honeymoon details. It goes way beyond that! Once we discovered this reality, Robert and I even made a funny joke about it, and called it “Day 1”. “Day 1”, for us is that time when the fairy tale ends and reality slowly seeps into our daily married life. Reality bites!

So, what is Marriage? Is it just a legal contract between a man and a woman? For us Catholics, marriage is more than a legal relationship. Our Catholic Church views this union between man and woman as a vocation. According to authors Abad and Fenoy, “Every vocation is a calling to accomplish some

specific mission. It demands a concrete response, a willingness to be God’s instrument to carry out freely and responsibly the task one has been entrusted with.”

Pope Francis said in his Letter to Married Couples for the “Amoris Laetitia Family” Year, Marriage, as a vocation, calls you to steer a tiny boat – wave-tossed yet sturdy, thanks to the reality of the sacrament – across a sometimes stormy sea. Marriage, a “stormy sea?” But we all thought that marriage was the place for perfect love and happiness. The biggest misconception of people is that the idea of marriage comes straight from a romantic movie. Most people do not realize that marriage is hard work. It involves the union of an imperfect man and an imperfect woman but who are called to love each other with all their faults and limitations. That’s why marriage is a lifelong commitment of self-surrender. It really calls for humility, fortitude and a spirit of self-sacrifice. Love between a man and a woman cannot be built without sacrifices and self-denial. Msg. Father Dolan quotes from a novelist, “Love itself is what is left over when being in love has burned away.”

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But, do not fret! We are not alone in fighting for this war. By the virtue of the sacrament of matrimony, Jesus is present in that boat. All we have to do is to keep our eyes fixed on Him alone. Pope Francis adds, "It is important that, together, you keep your eyes fixed on Jesus. Only in this way, will you find peace, overcome conflicts and discover solutions to many of your problems. Only by abandoning yourselves into the Lord's hands will you be able to do what may seem impossible. Recognize your own weakness and powerlessness in the face of so many situations all around you, but at the same time be certain that Christ's power will thus be manifested in your weakness" (cf. 2 Cor 12:9).

Pope John Paul II also emphasizes that couples always have the obligation to nourish their love for the sake of their union and stability of their home. We married couples always have to have a constant and positive attitude to make our marriages better. That is why prayer is very important. We always need to pray that we will continue to love our vocations, even when the road becomes difficult.

Sometimes, when struggles become too serious and heavy, we try to make things lighter by jokingly saying, "it's ok to endure all of these because it will help me go to heaven." As St. Josemaria fondly says to married couples, he would say to the husband,

"Your wife is your pathway to Heaven." Then he would turn to the wife and say the same thing about her husband. It was his way of saying that as married couples, we can reach Heaven through our spouses!

He also mentioned in one of his homilies about Christian marriage, that, "The spouses are called to sanctify their marriage and sanctify themselves in this union. The sacrament of marriage," he goes on to say, "is an action of Jesus who invades the souls of husband and wife. Keeping this in mind, it is possible to live happily together when we try to correct our own defects and make an effort to overlook the faults of our spouses.

This December, together with our 4 children, we will be celebrating our 24 years of married life. We are not going to lie and pretend that each and every day was perfect. We had our ups and downs, struggles left and right. But what is important is that we both continue to fight for our marriage, we continue to fight for us. What keeps us going.....allowing God to be present in our marriage and let HIS graces flow in our family and US. In the end, our marriage is not the end of fairy tales but a beginning to a journey to holiness (Catholic Link Quotes).





MARRIAGE AS A PATH TO HOLINESS

by DM and Noemi Marasigan
EduChild Couple President

“There is in fact, a fundamental difference between a good marriage and a holy marriage: in a good marriage husband and wife strive to love one another; in a holy marriage the couple places their efforts in the hands of God and so their gestures go beyond what they are capable of doing, showing what God can do.” (Gabriella Gambino, Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life)

Each of us is called to holiness in our own respective circumstances. To be holy is to be able to be fully human and being fully human is to continuously uncover and manifest the image of God in us. Marriage, if we may say, is a most special path towards holiness. St. John Paul II says that “All humanity passes through the family” and the family naturally starts with the union of husband and wife in marriage.

For us, marriage as a path to holiness demands three important aspects:

1. Unity
2. Commitment and
3. Self-giving

the primary sign that someone is ready for marriage is the ability to look beyond oneself and work for the good of another.

UNITY

Marriage brings two imperfect people together, each with his/her own strengths and weaknesses, idiosyncracies, beliefs, families, practices. Marriage brings the two of them to become one. The logical man and the emotional woman become one, throbbing with life as one person who tries to discover and do what is true, good and beautiful. Each aims to bring about the good of the other, directing each other towards personal excellence. In doing so, the intention is not to satisfy one’s expectations from the other but purely, to maximize his/her potentials.

Unity cannot be achieved without a healthy communication between the spouses. It will be good to start with a common vision which they can share with the children whom God may give them. For Christian marriages, a most noble vision is to bring everyone to heaven. St. Josemaria, during get-togethers with married couples will tell each one, “Your spouse is your pathway to heaven.” Not that one will be the cross of the other but they realize that they can actually start living heaven here on earth through each other.

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One of the most challenging things that husband and wife face is raising children. Adhering to their role as the primary educators of their children is not an easy feat. God entrusts to us children who we can form either deliberately or unknowingly. Without losing their individuality, the spouses choose to have one mind and will guided by clear principles and established family rules. The aim is to ensure that children become fully alive as human persons and not to go lower than their dignity as children of God.

COMMITMENT

In this time and age, commitment is a big word which the world lacks much of. Unfortunately, even before entering into marriage, some are already trying to find a possible exit 'in case' things don't work out. Yet, commitment should be 100%. It is total. We are not thinking of failing but we resolve to go through marriage with a strong resolve to make it work.

Marriage as a path to holiness demands that we are committed primarily to God's will. "The sacrament of marriage is an action of Jesus who invades the souls of husband and wife and invites them to follow Him, transforming their married life into a divine passage along the pathways of the Earth." (St. Josemaria Escriva) We shall be able to achieve this through prayer and the sacraments.

We acknowledge that we cannot do anything without God. His grace is the moving force which compels us to continue on with joy, hope, faith and love in this wonderful journey that He has set up for us.

Commitment to God will direct us naturally to our commitment to each other and to the family. This will require time and presence which, in the eyes of our children, mirror the omnipresence of God. Knowing should precede action. Having the regular interaction in the family helps us to know each other better and help in the formation of virtues which will lead to personal excellence.

SELF-GIVING

Holiness is a call to love. We've always said that the primary sign that someone is ready for marriage is the ability to look beyond oneself and work for the good of another. In the same way, the success of parenting can be seen in the spirit of service imbued in each of the children.

There is this deep yearning in our souls to give ourselves to others which, when satisfied, gives us immense joy. The self-giving which started between the spouses is extended to the children and whoever we encounter on our path to holiness. We then become the living gospel of Christ to others. We shall preach with our actions more than our words.

Marriage as a path of holiness starts with two and increases by the number of children shared with us by God. Along the path will be numerous other people who shall help us either through their own lives of holiness or through the challenges that allow us to grow in virtue. God has called us to this wondrous vocation and our correspondence to His call will provide this world families who will make it better each day.





UNITING WITH CHRIST

by Alvin and Henzy Villanueva
Grades 10, 11 and 12 Parents

Marriage as one of the sacraments is a path to holiness itself. As Jesus Christ tells us in Matthew 18:20: "When two or three are gathered together in My Name I am there in the midst of them." When a man and a woman enter into married life under the Sacrament of Matrimony, they are uniting themselves with Christ, believing that Christ will guide and bless them is therefore entering the path to holiness. As husband and wife continue to live their lives with Christ at the center of their relationship and living according to the teachings of the church, they are on the road to holiness.

Belonging to Generation X, witnessing couples living together without the sanctity of holy matrimony may be an option to some; But meeting and choosing the person you want to share your life with, following the teachings of the Church, and giving due respect to the person and his/her family leaves no room for avoiding the sacrament.

But the path to holiness does not end in the celebration of Holy Matrimony,

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as you go on with your married life for 5, 10 and 20 years, husband and wife must commit to avoiding temptations so as to avoid destroying their path to holiness. The spouses work together for the salvation of their souls and their children, not just merely living under one roof and providing the basic needs. As parents, the spouses not only tell their children to live a holy path but likewise serve as a good example to their children and lead them in doing so.

In this day and age, the technology and the convenience that comes along with it, the leisure that the world offers may also present itself as a venue to divert us into worldly and sometimes sinful acts but in our journey in life we must practice the virtue of righteousness.

Being married for 24 years, we had our fair share of challenges, from difficulty in conceiving a child, to finances, to busy schedules, to health issues. But as difficult as it may seem, we chose to live in accordance with our purpose when we decided to enter the world of married life. Knowing that human as we are, we may not be able to face all that is served in our plate, we make it a point to ask for God's guidance.

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Always keeping in mind that when we had our wedding ceremony, we committed to keep God at the center of our lives. So as not to be misled to a different path, we always ask for His orchestration for we believe that He knows what is right and what is best.

In return for God's unconditional love which keeps us together for 24 years through the ups and downs, we faithfully follow His will. We all have choices in life and most of us want to live a life divine. Having chosen to be united as one, we believe that this is our right path to holiness. Perhaps, we were led to PAREF Southridge School, to direct us even more to the right path as we are privileged to have our own formations as parents in this School.



IMPERFECT BEINGS

by Jingo and Pauline Fermin
Grade 12 Head Parent Coordinators

“ For a Christian, marriage is not just a social institution, much less a mere remedy for human weakness. It is a real supernatural calling. A great sacrament, in Christ and in the

Church, says St Paul. At the same time, it is a permanent contract between a man and a woman. Whether we like it or not, the sacrament of matrimony, instituted by Christ, cannot be dissolved. He transforms their whole married life into an occasion for God's presence on earth. Husband and wife are called to sanctify their married life and to sanctify themselves in it.” (Pt 23 Christ is Passing By St. Josemaria Escriva)

With these words of St. Josemaria Escriva, I began to examine and ponder on our married life so far. This December 26, 2023, Pauline and I will celebrate our 30 years of being husband and wife. And what a journey it has been so far. We both pray for a platinum (60 years) anniversary for ourselves; inspired by the example of my in-laws Papa Mans and Mama Cora who celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary last January 6, 2023. (Sadly, Papa passed away last February 16, 2023).

Marriage, is indeed, a path to holiness. I still recall, vividly, what Fr. Ramirez said in his homily during our wedding mass: “ You need to put Christ in the center of your married life in order for your love to grow and flourish”. Looking back, this is so true. Without Him, our love wouldn't have survived. During times of uncertainties, doubts, discouragements and troubles, we hurdled these challenges by calling upon God and asking for His Mercy and help. In all our family decisions and actions, we pray and offer our petitions to Him knowing and accepting fully well, that His will be done. Whether good or bad things happen, we thank Him and accept His will.

From a relationship standpoint, having Christ as a model and example of Love and sacrifice helps a lot. It is not easy to love an imperfect

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being (as you soon find out after the wedding bliss has worn off) but with Christ in the middle of your marriage, it becomes easier. Being imperfect yourself, you realize that marriage is a “work-in-progress”; a constant struggle to be the best version of yourself as a spouse and as a parent. It means dying to one’s self and embracing your daily cross (which could be your spouse, as the old joke goes). Every married man and woman will surely agree with me that in the course of your married life, you discover “defects” or “flaws” about your spouse; things you never saw during your years of courtship. It could range from the simplest of things like how he or she uses the toothpaste tube (squeeze from the top or bottom) or things like he or she has a hidden temper. These “defects” or “flaws” disappear in time either because you both strive to overlook each other’s faults or you work on them. What drives this? Love. Unconditional love. Love inspired by the selfless example of Christ in the Cross. We learn to accept our spouse for who he or she is not what we think he or she should be. My Theology 131 (Theology of Marriage) professor Dr. Tejido had a perfect example for this. He would always quote (and sing!) the

lyrics of that classic Carpenters song: “ You’ve got to love me for what I am for simply being me, Don’t love me for what you intend or hope that I will be” to drive home the point. Back then, we found it amusing but now, it really made sense. This is what it means when we say: “ We want our marriage to work” – patience; understanding, sacrifice, giving up on our preferences, even dreams, and ultimately, becoming better persons as you strive for harmony and stability in your relationship. These struggles are what “ purifies” both spouses.

ON CHILDREN OR FAMILY

A natural and beautiful offshoot of marriage is having children and building a family. It is the highest expression of the love between spouses and fulfills their essential role of being co-creators with God for the propagation of life on earth. The family, as we know, is our first apostolate. Our goal is to go to heaven and see our spouse and our children there. Thus, we strive to give our children the best education, comfort in life, and help/guide them to grow to be responsible and God-fearing adults like us. In raising their family, both spouses take the role of primary educators and formators of their children. Of course, there is no such thing as perfect parenting. When Pauline and I were raising our 5 kids (and we still are!) , many challenges and difficulties presented themselves to us: financially and more importantly, how to form them. We learned, even more, the value of sacrifice, of patience, of understanding each other including our children and how to work closely together as a couple in rearing them. We learned to strive to be better parents and role models to our kids, knowing fully well that our example as parents and the love Pauline and I show each other will make a lasting impact on them. Thankfully, with God’s grace, we seem to be doing well.

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ON QUARRELS AND ARGUMENTS

Arguments, fights, and disagreements are natural parts of any relationship, especially marriage. They are inevitable. Pauline and I had our share of major and minor fights throughout our 30 years of married life. These fights serve as tests of our love for each other and as we have always experienced, they even strengthen the relationship afterwards. Some important lessons we have learned so far are: 1) Never forget to listen and communicate. In the heat of the moment, it might not be possible to do this but once the emotions have died down, we make it a point to talk, listen to understand and to resolve our differences objectively and constructively. Whoever said that you should not sleep until you have resolved your differences is missing the point. Sure, if you can resolve it immediately, do it. Do not allow the argument to fester. BUT, if you have to cool off and take a break first, this is more productive as we have found out. 2) Learn how to say sorry and to forgive. You will need lots of these. A Catholic Facebook blog called “Fierce Marriage” (written by a couple Ryan and Selena) puts it aptly: “This is the perseverance piece. Resolve to never give up! Decide now that you will always talk (even when it's hard) and always forgive (even when it takes time).” This is what makes us holy. Again, unconditional love.



Since marriage is a “work-in-progress”, we should find ways to enhance it and strive to make it stronger, everyday. One tradition Pauline and I have found very effective is our Fridates (Friday dates). We have learned to make them as simple as possible (often times just a backyard dinner but carefully planned and with table arrangements) and not expensive. I would take care of planning the menu or we would just order in, from time to time. But more than the meal itself, we both look forward to these Fridates as our bonding moments – a time to relax, unwind, and talk about how our week went and important things like how our kids are doing, how do we handle our finances, etc. These times allow us to communicate, to affirm each other, to empathize, to support and give suggestions on how to handle situations and issues.

Being imperfect yourself, you realize that marriage is a “work-in-progress”; a constant struggle to be the best version of yourself as a spouse and as a parent.

In summary, marriage is, indeed, a path to holiness for both spouses. We learn and struggle to be better versions of ourselves and to always call on God and place Him in the center of our lives. To quote, “Marriage is an ongoing vivid illustration of what it costs to love an imperfect person unconditionally... Just as Christ has loved us.”



HOLINESS IN FAMILIES: A CELEBRATION OF CANONIZED AND BEATIFIED FAMILIES

by Emmanuel Inawat
Parents and Admin Staff Formation Head

In the Christian faith, the lives of saints and blessed individuals have often been highlighted as exemplars of holiness. While most saints and blessed individuals are celebrated for their personal holiness, there is a special category of holiness which celebrates entire families that have been canonized or beatified. Last September 10, 2023, the entire Ulm family was beatified in Markowa, Poland. The names of the parents were Venerable Servants of God, Jozef and Wiktoria Ulm and their seven children († March 24, 1944). Jozef and Wiktoria are married lay couple with seven children, murdered out of hatred of their faith on March 24, 1944, who, although aware of the risks and financial difficulties, hid a Jewish family in their house for a year and a half. When discovered, they were all murdered, including the child in Victoria's womb. This was a rare occasion when an entire family has been beatified on a single day.



In many religion traditions, the family is considered the foundational unit of society, and it is often viewed as a place where faith, love and moral values are nurtured. In Christianity, the family is seen as a sacred place where faith is not only taught but also lived out. The holiness of a family is not determined solely by individual actions but is rooted in the collective spirituality, love, and moral values of its members.

Another couple who is on their path to sainthood is Tomas and Paquita Alvira who are Supernumerary members of Opus Dei. They have been faithful to the spirit of the Work and have passed on to their children and to many other people their example of Christian life and marriage. They strove for sanctity through the heroic and persevering exercise of the Christian virtues. The Holy Mass was the center and root of their interior life. Assisted by divine grace and living in God's presence, they imbued their ordinary daily activities with supernatural meaning.



Both suffered painful illnesses towards the end of their lives, and offered up their suffering with a deeply supernatural outlook.




UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

PAREF Southridge **EDUCHILD**
 Loving Couples, Great Parents, Happy Families

SCHOOL FOR PARENTS


**2ND PARENTS FORUM
 PARENTING TEENS COURSE
 CASE 3 (GRADE 7)**



16 NOVEMBER, 2023
 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM, Thursday

Schedule

- 6:00 PM Registration / Dinner (Cafeteria Basement)
- 7:00 PM Principal's Report (Auditorium)
- 7:30 PM Start of the Moderated Plenary Sessions
- 8:30 PM Wrap-up / Q & A
 Filling-up of the Evaluation Forms



PAREF Southridge **EDUCHILD**
 Loving Couples, Great Parents, Happy Families

SCHOOL FOR PARENTS

**NEW PARENTS EDUCATION PROGRAM
 (NPEP) CASE #3**



**18 NOVEMBER 2023
 SATURDAY**

Schedule

- 8:30 AM Registration
- 9:00 Small Group Discussion
- 10:00 Morning Snacks
- 10:30 Moderated Plenary Session
- 11:45 Wrap-Up / Q & A
 Filling-Up of the NPEP Evaluation Form



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SCHOOL FOR PARENTS

**MIDDLE CHILDHOOD COURSE
 CASE 2 (GRADE 3)**



23 NOVEMBER, 2023
 6:00 PM - 8:45 PM, Thursday
 Venue: Conference Rooms A, B, & C

Schedule

- 6:00 PM Registration / Dinner
- 7:00 PM Start of the Moderated Plenary Sessions
- 8:30 PM Wrap-up / Q & A
 Filling-up of the Evaluation Forms
- 8:45 PM End of Activity



PAREF Southridge **EDUCHILD**
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2ND PARENTS FORUM (GRADE 8)

**GETTING TO KNOW
 OUR TEENS**



WEDNESDAY
 29 November 2023
 06:00 - 8:30 PM

SR AUDITORIUM

Speaker by
CHELET TANJUATCO
 Woodrose Mom,
 Family Advocate & Strategy Consultant
 UA&P Professor

Schedule

- 6:00 PM DINNER (cafeteria basement)
- 7:00 PM PRINCIPAL'S REPORT
- 7:30 PM TALK
- 8:30 PM HPC REPORT





PAREF Southridge



Paref Southridge School
invites you to its

OPEN HOUSE

Nov. 23, 2023 | 8:30am

**FOR MORE
INFORMATION**

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Scan the QR code to register



NOVEMBER VIRTUE OF THE MONTH

NOVEMBER Virtue of the Month **OBEDIENCE**

Advice to Parents

Parents can help their sons develop the virtue of Obedience through the following:

- Use a soft-spoken tone whenever you ask them to do something. Avoid yelling or nagging.
- Show how things are done before asking them to do the work themselves. Show patience when they do not follow as instructed.
- Never give them a command you do not intend to see carried out. If you are unable to make sure that your command is obeyed, better not give it.
- Give clear and understandable instructions appropriate to their age. Make them acknowledge your instructions.
- Suggest to them what you want them to do instead of telling them what they should not do.
- Set down rules about acceptable behavior. Be consistent with the rules you set.
- Show appreciation for tasks when performed. Don't be stingy in praising them.
- Show good example in the fulfillment of your civic duties, e.g., follow traffic rules, fall in line, pay your taxes on time, exercise your right to vote, etc.
- Explain to them the reward of perfect obedience which is freedom and independence.
- Collaborate with the mentors in the formation of your sons.

VIRILITER AGITE



NOVEMBER CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES



PAREF Southridge



NOVEMBER

Calendar of Activities
School Year 2023 – 2024

28 Oct – 5	Sat – Sun	All Saints/Souls Day Break
5	Sunday	1st Sunday Recollection for Men (English)
6	Monday	GS & JHS Start of 2nd Trimester AS Student Assembly
9	Thursday	GS Student Assembly
10	Friday	JHS/SHS Student Assembly
7 – 10	Tue – Fri	SHS Mid Sem 1 Period 2 Exams
8 – 10	Wed – Fri	AS Student Seminars
11	Saturday	Parent Leadership Seminar for HPCs and DHPCs
15	Wednesday	Club Day/ PAASCU Work
16	Thursday	Gr. 7 Parenting Teens Case 3
18	Saturday	NPEP Case 3
18 – 19	Sat – Sun	Grade 3 Father & Son Activity
		Grade 5 Father & Son Activity
		Grade 11 Father & Son Activity
22	Wednesday	FDS: Faculty and Staff Recollection International College Fair
23	Thursday	Open House 1
		Gr. 3 Middle Childhood Course Case 2
26	Sunday	4th Sunday Recollection for Men (Filipino)
27	Monday	Bonifacio Day (Holiday)
29	Wednesday	S.E.A.L.
		Gr. 8 Second Parents Forum

