

FROM THE DESK OF **Fr. Julius**



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Once again, a special acknowledgement to all those who prepared and attended the parish picnic organized by the Knights of Columbus last weekend. I thank the Hispanic community for the nice meal they brought to share with us. Day by day, our fellowship attests to the unity and spiritual maturity amongst members.

Our readings this weekend bear testimony to the bond of love that marriage creates between a man and a woman, which God expects to remain permanent. We cannot be reminded often enough of its centrality to the Church. Our First Reading explains God's original plan concerning marriage: that God made man and woman for each other, that the man "clings to his wife, and the two become one flesh." Pivotal to this is the need for each member to spiritually grow together, thus forming the strongest bond possible. The Letter to the Hebrews in the Second Reading reminds us that Jesus became one of us, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. As one of us, He "tasted death for everyone." He was not only the Sacrifice, but also the High Priest. We are now His brothers and sisters, bonded with Him, and through Him bonded with God and the Holy Spirit.

In the Gospel, Jesus makes an explicit declaration of the Father's will and the sacredness of marriage by forbidding man from interfering in God's original plan; thus, the indissolubility of marriage. These are difficult messages to address in a society that embraces co-habitation and ignores escalating divorce statistics and the consequences. By welcoming children and especially encouraging their relationship with God, the Catholic family bears witness to the Kingdom of God. What we can impart to our younger people is the strength and vitality of their Catholic faith as a living experience of God, eventually enabling them to marry in a *different* way than if their Catholic faith is simply inherited and not flourishing.

What do fruitful marriages exhibit? My observance is that each spouse draws on a deep well as they are called upon to die to one's self in thousands of little ways. This is where we have the Latin word *amare* (to love and be loved), a union that wills the true good of the other – focusing on the positive behavior of each other. We can all visualize these dynamics in the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, imagining their selflessness for the good of their family blended with the deep faith life that existed within their household. It is my prayer that families beseech the Holy Family for strengthening their child rearing and deepening their bond together, in raising up children capable of flourishing marital futures.

— Blessed Sunday!