



# COULD YOU BE A MARRIAGE SPONSOR?



Do you love being married? Your experiences give you a particular wisdom to share.

If you are, or have been married and want to share the joys and sorrows of this remarkable vocation, why not think about becoming a marriage sponsor.

"Marriage Preparation should be a kind of "initiation" to the sacrament of matrimony, providing couples with the help they need to receive the sacrament worthily and to make a solid beginning of life as a family."

*(Amoris Laetitia#207)*



Some couples who seek marriage within our church are known to us and are part of our parish community. They either live locally, or they have grown up locally and still have families nearby. For some however, this may be their first introduction to our community. **You** can change their experience, actively making them feel welcome by becoming a sponsor.

Walking with someone is the greatest gift we can offer. When Jesus walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus he listened to their stories and made them feel loved; **that is what being a sponsor is all about.**



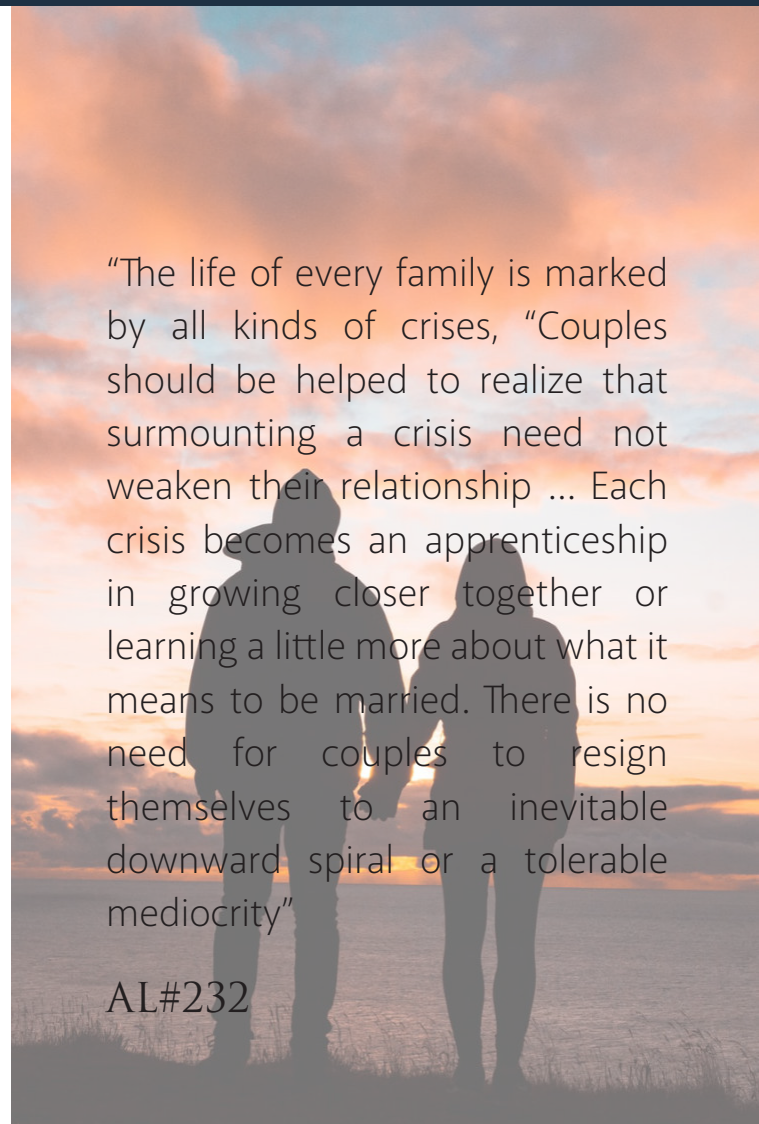
At times, the couple does not grasp the theological and spiritual import of the words of consent, which illuminate the meaning of all the signs that follow. It needs to be stressed that these words cannot be reduced to the present; they involve a totality that includes the future: "until death do us part".

AL#214.

## WHAT IS A MARRIAGE SPONSOR?

A sponsor is someone who brings a great gift to an engaged couple, the gift of themselves, with their experience of the joys and sorrows of marriage. Your role will be to walk alongside the couple, most importantly praying for them, sharing the excitement of the upcoming day, befriending them, and supporting them with their concerns.

A relationship may be formed between you where you continue this support into their early married life, a time we know can be a significant adjustment. Sponsors play an important role, helping to show couples that being married is a verb; it is an ongoing action that happens daily. Your own married lives will have seen ups and downs, glorious moments, and difficult ones. We are not inviting you to share personal details, but it might be helpful to share the rollercoaster that a married life offers.



"The life of every family is marked by all kinds of crises, "Couples should be helped to realize that surmounting a crisis need not weaken their relationship ... Each crisis becomes an apprenticeship in growing closer together or learning a little more about what it means to be married. There is no need for couples to resign themselves to an inevitable downward spiral or a tolerable mediocrity"

AL#232

**As marriages mature, we learn to adapt and grow, understanding each other in a deeper, more holistic way. Each day we make the decision to fall in love with them anew.**



It is not teaching catechesis, it is about **you**, your married life, and your pleasure in being married. Your Parish priest has asked you to become a marriage sponsor because you are a warm friendly person, not because you possess a particular skill set which means you fit a job description. You are you!



Another great challenge of marriage preparation is to help couples realize that marriage is not something that happens once for all. Their union is real and irrevocable, confirmed and consecrated by the sacrament of matrimony. Yet in joining their lives, the spouses assume an active and creative role in a lifelong project. Their gaze now has to be directed to the future that, with the help of God's grace, they are daily called to build.

AL#218

There are a number of ways you can support an engaged couple as their marriage sponsor. The following list offers a number of ideas and suggestions. Your parish priest will be able to help and advise what works best in your parish:

- Say hello! Phoning your couple and introducing yourself is a great place to start.
- Invite the couple to join you for Mass, welcome them outside and bring them into the church with you.
- Invite the couple to join you at a parish event. Highlighting that the couple are needed within their church community will make it easier for them to participate actively in parish life. Find out where their interests lie and encourage them to help the church community in that way.
- Offer to support the couple with particular details or elements of their wedding day.
- Request a photo of the couple to place in the church. Pray for the couple each day; remind your parish office to include prayers for them in your parish newsletters and the prayers of the faithful.

### ***Pope Francis:***

I encourage Christian communities to recognize the great benefit that they themselves receive from supporting engaged couples as they grow in love. As the Italian bishops have observed, those couples are “a valuable resource because, as they sincerely commit themselves to grow in love and self-giving, they can help renew the fabric of the whole ecclesial body. Their special form of friendship can prove contagious and foster the growth of friendship and fraternity in the Christian community of which they are a part”.

AL#207

**Offering ourselves in this way is good for us too! People involved with engaged couples often speak of the graces they receive. Being a sponsor offers an opportunity to revisit our own feelings and emotions, to reevaluate our own marriage. Parishes too enjoy the witness of newly married love as a reminder of Christ's love for humanity.**



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