



# IDAHO VOCATION



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# DISCERNING MARRIAGE

**APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION**  
***FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO***  
**OF POPE**  
**JOHN PAUL II TO THE EPISCOPATE**  
**TO THE CLERGY AND TO THE FAITHFUL**  
**OF THE WHOLE CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
**ON THE ROLE**  
**OF THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY**  
**IN THE MODERN WORLD**

PART ONE

BRIGHT SPOTS AND SHADOWS FOR THE FAMILY TODAY

**The Need To Understand the Situation**

4. Since God's plan for marriage and the family touches men and women in the concreteness of their daily existence in specific social and cultural situations, the Church ought to apply herself to understanding the situations within which marriage and the family are lived today, in order to fulfill her task of serving.[8]

This understanding is, therefore, an inescapable requirement of the work of evangelization. It is, in fact, to the families of our times that the Church must bring the unchangeable and ever new Gospel of Jesus Christ, just as it is the families involved in the present conditions of the world that are called to accept and to live the plan of God that pertains to them. Moreover, the call and demands of the Spirit resound in the very events of history, and so the Church can also be guided to a more profound understanding of the inexhaustible mystery of marriage and the family by the circumstances, the questions and the anxieties and hopes of the young people, married couples and parents of today.[9]

To this ought to be added a further reflection of particular importance at the present time. Not infrequently ideas and solutions which are very appealing but which obscure in varying degrees the truth and the dignity of the human person, are offered to the men and women of today, in their sincere and deep search for a response to the important daily problems that affect their married and family life. These views are often supported by the powerful and pervasive organization of the means of social communication, which subtly endanger freedom and the capacity for objective judgment.

Many are already aware of this danger to the human person and are working for the truth. The Church, with her evangelical discernment, joins with them, offering her own service to the truth, to freedom and to the dignity of every man and every woman.

**Evangelical Discernment**

5. The discernment effected by the Church becomes the offering of an orientation in order that the entire truth and the full dignity of marriage and the family may be preserved and realized.

This discernment is accomplished through the sense of faith,[10] which is a gift that the Spirit gives to all the faithful,[11] and is therefore the work of the whole Church according to the diversity of the various gifts and charisms that, together with and according to the responsibility proper to each one, work together for a more profound understanding and activation of the word of God. The Church, therefore, does not accomplish this discernment only through the Pastors, who teach in the name and with the power of Christ but also through the laity: Christ "made them His witnesses and gave them understanding of the faith and the grace of speech (cf. Acts 2:17-18; Rv. 19:10), so that the power of the Gospel might shine forth in their daily social and family life." [12] The laity, moreover, by reason of their particular vocation have the specific role of interpreting the history of the world in the light of Christ, in as much as they are called to illuminate and organize temporal realities according to the plan of God, Creator and Redeemer.

The "supernatural sense of faith" [13] however does not consist solely or necessarily in the consensus of the faithful. Following Christ, the Church seeks the truth, which is not always the same as the majority opinion. She listens to conscience and not to power, and in this way she defends the poor and the downtrodden. The Church values sociological and statistical research, when it proves helpful in understanding the historical context in which pastoral action has to be developed and when it leads to a better understanding of the truth. Such research alone, however, is not to be considered in itself an expression of the sense of faith.

Because it is the task of the apostolic ministry to ensure that the Church remains in the truth of Christ and to lead her ever more deeply into that truth, the Pastors must promote the sense of the faith in all the faithful, examine and authoritatively judge the genuineness of its expressions, and educate the faithful in an ever more mature evangelical discernment. [14]

Christian spouses and parents can and should offer their unique and irreplaceable contribution to the elaboration of an authentic evangelical discernment in the various situations and cultures in which men and women live their marriage and their family life. They are qualified for this role by their charism or specific gift, the gift of the sacrament of matrimony. [15]

#### The Situation of the Family in the World Today

6. The situation in which the family finds itself presents positive and negative aspects: the first are a sign of the salvation of Christ operating in the world; the second, a sign of the refusal that man gives to the love of God.

On the one hand, in fact, there is a more lively awareness of personal freedom and greater attention to the quality of interpersonal relationships in marriage, to promoting the dignity of women, to responsible procreation, to the education of children. There is also an awareness of the need for the development of interfamily relationships, for reciprocal spiritual and material assistance, the rediscovery of the ecclesial mission proper to the family and its responsibility for the building of a more just society. On the other hand, however, signs are not lacking of a disturbing degradation of some fundamental values: a mistaken theoretical and practical concept of the independence of the spouses in relation to each other; serious misconceptions regarding the relationship of authority between parents and children; the concrete difficulties that the family itself experiences in the transmission of values; the growing number of divorces; the scourge of abortion; the ever more frequent recourse to sterilization; the appearance of a truly contraceptive mentality.

At the root of these negative phenomena there frequently lies a corruption of the idea and the experience of freedom, conceived not as a capacity for realizing the truth of God's plan for marriage and

Worthy of our attention also is the fact that, in the countries of the so-called Third World, families often lack both the means necessary for survival, such as food, work, housing and medicine, and the most elementary freedoms. In the richer countries, on the contrary, excessive prosperity and the consumer mentality, paradoxically joined to a certain anguish and uncertainty about the future, deprive married couples of the generosity and courage needed for raising up new human life: thus life is often perceived not as a blessing, but as a danger from which to defend oneself.

The historical situation in which the family lives therefore appears as an interplay of light and darkness.

This shows that history is not simply a fixed progression towards what is better, but rather an event of freedom, and even a struggle between freedoms that are in mutual conflict, that is, according to the well-known expression of St. Augustine, a conflict between two loves: the love of God to the point of disregarding self, and the love of self to the point of disregarding God.[16]

It follows that only an education for love rooted in faith can lead to the capacity of interpreting "the signs of the times," which are the historical expression of this twofold love.

### The Influence of Circumstances on the Consciences of the Faithful

7. Living in such a world, under the pressures coming above all from the mass media, the faithful do not always remain immune from the obscuring of certain fundamental values, nor set themselves up as the critical conscience of family culture and as active agents in the building of an authentic family humanism.

Among the more troubling signs of this phenomenon, the Synod Fathers stressed the following, in particular: the spread of divorce and of recourse to a new union, even on the part of the faithful; the acceptance of purely civil marriage in contradiction to the vocation of the baptized to "be married in the Lord", the celebration of the marriage sacrament without living faith, but for other motives; the rejection of the moral norms that guide and promote the human and Christian exercise of sexuality in marriage.



# The Call to Marriage:

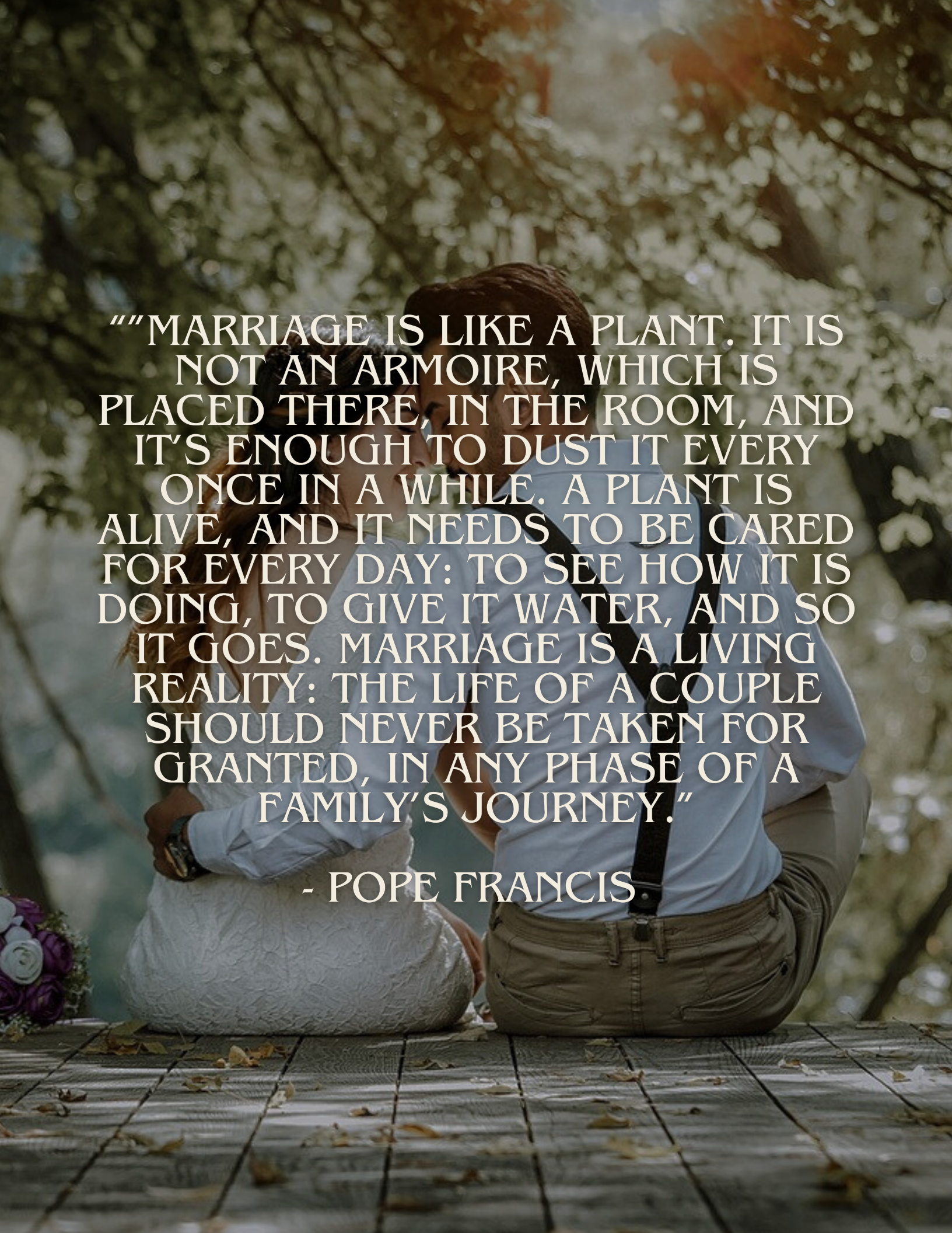
## A Witness by Joseph Cordaro and Elisa Larson

When we both graduated in May of 2022, and neither of us had the intention of being in Boise only months later. However, by God's intervention our original plans changed and we both ended up in Boise at St. Paul's: Joseph as a FOCUS missionary and Elisa as the Operations Coordinator. While there was initial mutual attraction, due to the nature of our jobs (FOCUS requires first year missionaries to be on a dating fast) and the transition from college into the working world we started off with a foundation of friendship (grrr). We both recognized each other's feelings about late winter and had an open conversation about the ways we could continue to respect the dating fast, which established our good base of communication.

From May, when the dating fast ended, to now, our relationship has truly unfolded so naturally. We feel like "the next thing just kept happening" with no foreseeable end. With no end in sight we started discussing our future together and realized we both desired the same thing. There were no roadblocks like long distance, emotional barriers, etc. We both felt like we didn't lose our core values when we started dating, instead the other person made us more of who we are and not less. Elisa's mom would always say "you have to make sure you have the same non-negotiables. From there you can both introduce different interests to share with the other but you have to be on the same page with your "foundation.



We found that non-negotiables like the fact that God was the most important thing in our lives and we put Him first always, our mutual desire to have children, the prioritization of caring for both our body and souls, capacity for vulnerability, and facing conflict in approachable ways aligned. We both have discovered that your vocation is very much a gift to be received from God rather than something to earn or a puzzle you have to solve. God shaped us in the past, divinely prepared us to meet each other at this exact moment, and provided the space and freedom to allow the other person into our life moving forward. In all of this we both were finding peace, prayers answered, and that we were more ourselves around each other than we thought we had the capacity for which is how we both felt led to this call to marriage together.

A couple is sitting on a wooden deck outdoors. The woman is on the left, wearing a white wedding dress and holding a bouquet of purple and white flowers. The man is on the right, wearing a light blue shirt and khaki pants. They are both looking towards each other. The background shows trees with green and yellow leaves, suggesting an autumn setting. The text is overlaid in the center of the image.

“MARRIAGE IS LIKE A PLANT. IT IS NOT AN ARMOIRE, WHICH IS PLACED THERE, IN THE ROOM, AND IT'S ENOUGH TO DUST IT EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE. A PLANT IS ALIVE, AND IT NEEDS TO BE CARED FOR EVERY DAY: TO SEE HOW IT IS DOING, TO GIVE IT WATER, AND SO IT GOES. MARRIAGE IS A LIVING REALITY: THE LIFE OF A COUPLE SHOULD NEVER BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED, IN ANY PHASE OF A FAMILY'S JOURNEY.”

- POPE FRANCIS

# UPCOMING EVENTS



- November 1st (Wed.) - All Saint's Day
- November 2nd (Thurs.) - All Soul's Day
  - 6:00 pm Dinner
  - 7:30 pm Cemetery Mass
    - Bring hand warmers!!!
- November 11th (Sat.) - Football vs. New Mexico
- November 20th-26th - Thanksgiving break
- November 25th (Sat.) - Football vs. Air Force
- December 8th - Feast of the Immaculate Conception/ Winter formal
- December 9th (Sat.) - Student leader Christmas party
- Add theme to white elephant (es: something stolen from grandma's house")
- December 12th - Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe
- December 11th-15th - Finals week
- December 16th (Sat.) - Commencement

Help your sons and daughters stay connected with our seminarians by following their stories on Facebook and Instagram. It's my hope that in this way more young people can become familiar with the life of seminarians.