

SNAP-SHOT

Through the Annual Pastoral Appeal (APA), the People of God in the Diocese of St. Petersburg support over 50 ministries, programs and services to thousands across our 5 county area.

Our appeal is truly an opportunity for each and every Catholic household to help further the mission of the Church, to become a part of the everyday miracles we experience through sharing our gifts as good stewards. ***Let's take a closer look at some of the good works underway in the...***

OFFICE OF MARRIAGE & FAMILY MINISTRIES

The Marriage & Family Ministry is an office within the Department of Evangelization and Lifelong Faith Formation, which seeks to support local parish efforts to evangelize the people of God and nourish the formation of the Church through all ages and phases of life. In partnership with priests, deacons and lay leaders, this office supports the Sacrament of Matrimony in providing programs for marriage preparation, enrichment and fostering a Catholic family life, and in addition serves those struggling and in need with counseling and Natural Family Planning (NFP) referrals, and divorce ministry.

This past year, 700 couples from 79 parishes, missions, the University of South Florida and MacDill AFB have experienced the following ministries, programs and services:

- **Joined in Christ** – This is our diocesan guide for new couples preparing for the Sacrament of Marriage in the Catholic Church, including both information for clergy and engaged couples.
- **Journey to Matrimony** – As couples ready themselves to spend the rest of their lives together and enter into the Sacrament of Marriage, *Journey to Matrimony* is based on the belief that successful marriages thrive on a strong Christian foundation and is intended for those who wish to deepen and enrich their relationship, and desire a richer and fuller life together.
- **Pre Cana** – Also a preparation program for couples entering the Sacrament of Marriage, this program (available in English and Spanish) is recommended at the discretion of the clergy for first time marriages in cases where Journey to Matrimony might not be feasible.
- **Remarriage Program** – A program offered for couples where one or both individuals were previously married, regardless of circumstances of that marriage. Both Catholic and Inter-faith couples (a Catholic marrying a non-Catholic) are welcome to attend. This multi-purpose program also serves those seeking **Convalidation** and **Marriage Enrichment**.
- **Worldwide Marriage Encounter** – This program is aimed at revitalizing Christian marriages with the emphasis on learning a technique of loving communication. Couples have the opportunity to look deeply into their relationship with each other and with God. This program offers an opportunity intended to enhance a good marriage and make it better.
- **Retrouvaille** - A program offering the means to rediscover a loving marriage relationship and where thousands of couples headed for cold, unloving relationships or divorce have successfully overcome their marriage problems.
- **Strengthening the Bonds of Marriage** – Our newest one-day marriage enrichment program offers discussion and exercises on understanding differences, creating a lasting relationship based on mental, physical and spiritual intimacy, discovering more about yourself, your spouse and your marriage and rekindling love for each other and making your relationship the best it can be.
- **Diálogo Matrimonial – MDS** – Matrimony, Dialogue and succession, a Catholic based enrichment program directed to all married couples. MDS is based on fostering a solid relationship under God's plan of love, comprehension and respect, and developing good communication and nurturing a healthy family life with God as center of the marriage.
- **Wedding Jubilee Mass of Thanksgiving** - This past March, 338 couples from 56 parishes from across our diocese and representing 16,919 years of marriage gathered at the Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle to celebrate the annual diocesan Marriage Jubilee Mass.

