

# BUILDING A CIVILIZATION OF LOVE

Official Family Newsletter of the Archdiocese of KCK



## FEBRUARY: THE MONTH OF THE HOLY FAMILY

BY ANNIE KYLE

If I am being completely honest, February has never been my favorite month. In fact my husband and I both often dread it's arrival. Although it is the shortest month, February always seems to feel like the longest and coldest of the year and often brings me a sense of deep longing. A longing for light. A longing for hope. A longing for Spring. That is however, until 8 months ago when February felt like it could not get here soon enough!

This February my husband and I will be welcoming the birth of our first child and the anticipation has truly been the most joyful I have ever experienced. The thoughts of dreary, bitterly cold, and dark February days quickly turned into the opportunity instead for warm cozy nights by a fire with snuggles from a sleeping infant in my arms. Suddenly I could not wait for the cold to get here. Its arrival meant I would soon be holding the little life that I had already grown to love so dearly. How appropriate it was then to learn that February is actually declared as the month of the Holy Family. Perhaps my curmudgeonly viewpoints would have been altered if I had known of this dedication much sooner! How fitting it is to have the Holy Family's influence of joy and hope in a month that is so often dreaded by many.

The end of Winter can be very taxing on families. Statistically it has been shown that the months of the most divorce filings occur from January to March. With the holiday season behind, seasonal anxiety and depression at its peak, and cabin fever beginning to truly set in, it's no wonder how the month of February can bring a lot of strain on families and marriages. What better time to call upon the intercession of the Holy Family in our own lives? We know that while they were chosen by God, they were not exempt from the stresses, fears, and anxieties of the world. If anyone were to understand our hearts and tribulations it would be them. I pray that this February we all might take extra time to reflect on their example of vocation and ask them to interceded for us. May they teach us how to share in their radical joy, hope, and love even in the face of difficulty and bear with one another when times get hard. After all, how can our hearts be troubled by cold and darkness when Jesus, Mary, and Joseph sit so close nearby!

## This issue:

[February: The Month Of The Holy Family](#)

[PAGE 01](#)

[Wedding Garment](#)

[PAGE 02](#)

[How to Talk to Your Adult Kids When They Make Poor Choices](#)

[PAGE 03 & 04](#)

[Running Towards Heaven Together: Featured Married Saint of the Month](#)

[PAGE 05](#)

[The Striving Saint: Resources](#)

[PAGE 06 & 07](#)

# WEDDING GARMENT

## BY LIBBY DUPONT

My brother-in-law got married a few years ago, and it was a treat for our family. Not only were we excited for him to enter into marriage with his lovely bride, but being in our 40's, we were in a "wedding desert", as our friends are all married, and their kids haven't started getting married yet. It had been a while since we had been to the wedding of someone we knew and loved well, and we were excited.

I got a new dress. We got hubby measured for his tux. I spent hours crafting my daughter's gorgeous natural curls. We bought a gift. We kept the weekend clear for a year in advance and excitedly drove to St. Louis for the weekend.

In Matthew Chapter 22, a man holds a wedding feast for his son. After the "A List" fails to show up, he invites anyone and everyone to come join in the fun. It sounds super inclusive until he throws out the guy without a wedding garment on. I have always thought that this was a little harsh. I mean, what if he was just poor and didn't have one? What if he really preferred jeans to dress clothes? But God himself is the host in this analogy, so it doesn't make sense that he would hold someone accountable to an impossible standard, like expecting him to have something he couldn't afford.

As I reflected on my brother-in-law's wedding, it made sense to me. It's about our attitude. We made a fuss about Craig's wedding because it was something worth fussing over. Marriage is a big deal! The care we took in preparing for his big day was proportional to how important that day was. Can you imagine how insulting it would've been if we had shown up in our pajamas? What if we had shown up a few minutes late directly from doing yard work or cleaning the toilet? What would that say about our attitude toward his wedding? The man had no reverence for the importance of the situation, so he was cast out.



I think there is an important lesson here for us as we approach marriage on a daily basis. We dress up and celebrate for weddings because they are an important marker. They indicate the beginning of a sacramental life together as husband and wife. Long after the decorations are put away, the honeymoon is over and the shiny new gifts are worn, the marriage remains. Do we show it the same reverence it was due on the wedding day? We're clearly not talking about tux rentals here, but there are many ways we can show "wedding day" reverence toward marriage every day:

- Refrain from jokes that denigrate marriage (such as calling it a "ball and chain" or suggesting it's all about just saying "yes dear").
- Support struggling friends by being a voice for their marriage, not fanning flames of hurt.
- Proactively befriend a younger couple to be a mentor to them.
- Offer empathy and healing to those suffering the loss of marriage through death or divorce.

Every year, the USCCB participates in National Marriage Week from February 7-14. You can find resources for celebrating in your parish, or even just in your own marriage with an at-home retreat.

[National Marriage Week | USCCB](#)



# HOW TO TALK TO YOUR ADULT KIDS WHEN THEY MAKE POOR CHOICES

BY RACHAEL POPCAK

Carol called into the More2Life radio show with a dilemma: Her 32-year-old daughter, Julia, had moved in with her boyfriend, Chuck.

“I want to be supportive of her, but I can’t endorse her choices,”

Carol said. She felt trapped, she said, between her love for her daughter and her moral objections. How can you show love and support for your adult child while staying true to your values? It’s a common dilemma for many parents of adult children. The answer lies in understanding the difference between support and endorsement, according to Dr. Greg and Lisa Popcak, the authors of *Having Meaningful (Sometimes Difficult) Conversations with Your Adult Sons & Daughters*.

## SUPPORT VS. ENDORSEMENT: UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE

The good news for Carol (and anyone in a similar dilemma) is that it is possible to support someone without endorsing or approving of their choices. As St. Augustine famously said, “Love the sinner, hate the sin.”

How is this possible? The key is supporting the legitimate need or good intention behind your child’s poor choice. Almost always, our adult children don’t believe they are making bad choices—they genuinely feel their actions are reasonable. As the Popcaks point out, all of us tend to rationalize our poor choices by focusing on the good we hope to realize by making them.

Once you identify the good your child is trying to achieve, that good can become the basis of your support. Instead of getting into an argument about the morality or wisdom of the choice (“Cohabiting is sinful/foolish”)—an argument that probably won’t end well—you can work together to find healthier, holier ways to meet your child’s intentions. Rather than being on opposing sides, you’re now on the same team.

## CAROL AND JULIA: A CASE STUDY

Let’s see how these steps might play out in Carol’s situation with her daughter, Julia:

**Focus on Intentions, Not Actions.** Carol starts by asking Julia a compassionate, open-ended question: “Can you help me understand why living with Chuck feels like the best option for you?” This strategy keeps the conversation constructive by signaling Carol’s willingness to understand Julia’s perspective, rather than jumping to judgment. It helps Julia feel heard and opens the door to exploring her intentions more deeply. Julia explains that she and Chuck are saving money to eventually get married, and they want to build a stable foundation for their future.

“By distinguishing between support and endorsement, you can maintain strong, loving relationships with your adult children while staying true to your faith.”

-RACHEL POPCAK



**Affirm Positive Goals.** Carol acknowledges Julia’s good intentions. She might say, “I can see that financial stability and a strong foundation are important to you, and I want that for you too.” By affirming Julia’s goals, Carol builds trust and creates a space for a deeper conversation.

**Gently Challenge Assumptions.** Next, Carol gently challenges the way that Julia is attempting to reach her goal of financial security. She might say, “Have you ever considered that living together might be getting in the way of that goal? Have you thought about whether living together could complicate things financially?” This helps Julia consider potential risks without feeling judged or attacked.

**Explore Better Alternatives.** If Julia is open to the conversation so far, Carol might help her explore healthier ways of achieving her goal of financial stability. She might say, “Let’s talk about other ways you can work toward your goals while also honoring what we both believe is important.”

In all likelihood, the conversation won’t be quite so straightforward. For example, as Carol and Julia continue talking together, it might come out that Julia would like to be married, but she is afraid that if she pushes Chuck on the question, he might leave her, and then she would be alone. This is a new layer of intention behind Julia’s choice, and a new avenue for conversation.

### KEEPING THE CONVERSATION GOING

It might be tempting to cut straight to the chase (“What you’re doing is wrong, and it’s going to end badly”). While that may be true, it is probably the least effective way to change your adult child’s mind. It could also result in your child shutting down, keeping you at a distance, or breaking off communication entirely.

That’s why the Popcaks recommend a more empathetic approach.

“Throughout all these conversations, Carol is not—at least directly—trying to talk Julia out of living with Chuck,” the Popcaks write. “She is accepting the fact that this is the way things are for now. But Carol is recognizing that Julia is cohabiting, not because she wants to live an immoral life or reject her parents’ values or defy God, but because she is scared. She doesn’t know how to meet her needs without making the choices she has made.”

### A PATH FORWARD

Parenting doesn’t stop when your children become adults—it simply changes. By distinguishing between support and endorsement, you can maintain strong, loving relationships with your adult children while staying true to your faith. This approach not only preserves your connection but also supports your adult child in their spiritual growth.

For more insights on navigating difficult conversations with your adult children, check out [Having Meaningful \(Sometimes Difficult\) Conversations with Your Adult Sons & Daughters](#) by Dr. Greg and Lisa Popcak. And if you need personalized guidance, visit [CatholicCounselors.com](http://CatholicCounselors.com) to connect with a faith-based pastoral counselor.

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# RUNNING TOWARDS HEAVEN TOGETHER: FEATURED MARRIED SAINT OF THE MONTH

August 9th 1945 - The second atomic bomb hits Nagasaki, the city containing the largest Catholic population in Japan. The bomb kills more than 70,000 people instantly. Paulus Takashi Nagai, a doctor of radiology miraculously survives and climbs out from underneath the rubble of the city's hospital. The next day he takes it upon himself to help organize a mobile unit of nurses and students to serve people in the city in need of medical attention. It is not until two days after the bombing that he is able to go to his home in search of his wife Marina Midori. Marina, the woman who had introduced him to the faith, who had prayed for his conversion, and who had raised two beautiful children with him, was gone. The only thing remaining of her was charred bones and a mangled rosary clutched in her hands. In tears, Takashi prayed to Our Lady and his Savior for the love of his life:

“Dearest God, thank you for allowing her to die praying. Mother of Sorrows, thank you for being with faithful Midori at the hour of her death. . . . Ah, gracious Jesus our Saviour, you once sweat blood and bore the heavy Cross to your crucifixion. And now you have shed peaceful light on the mystery of suffering and death, on Midori’s and my own.”

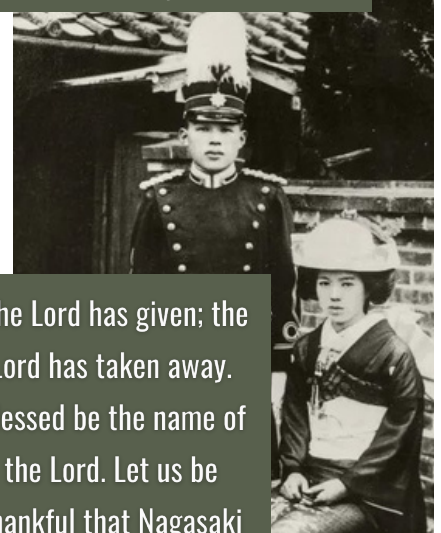
The lives of Servants of God Takashi Nagai and Marina Midori are certainly ones of great faith, sacrifice, and above all immeasurable love. The two met in 1931 when Takashi, a medical student intrigued by the Christian faith, decided to board in the home of Midori’s family. The Midori family had been devout believers tracing back to the influence of St. Francis Xavier and underground Catholics in Japan. It was not until his Christmas break that Takashi met Marina who immediately invited him to join the family for Christmas mass. Not only did Takashi attend his first mass but he would then save Marina’s life when he diagnosed symptoms of appendicitis and carried her on his back in the snow to the nearest hospital. After performing the appendectomy and caring for her, he found himself drawn to her gentleness and the two began a great friendship. Takashi found himself inspired by Marina and her faith while Marina continued to pray fervently each day for his conversion. One story even goes to share that Takashi decided not to enter a brothel with his soldier friends one night while out drinking. When he spoke to Marina about this they realized that at that very moment Marina had been praying in the Cathedral before a statue of Our Lady for him. After much discernment, Takashi was baptized into the Catholic Church in 1934 and took the name Paulus. By the end of that year, the two were married and went on to welcome two children together. In their marriage they encouraged one another, devoted their lives to the Blessed Mother, and worked diligently in their community. Marina was a teacher and Takashi worked as a radiology doctor, serving patients who could not travel or pay for medical treatment. In all things, Marina and Takashi were lead by their love for one another and their unflinching faith.

After Marina’s passing, Takashi continued to serve the city through his dedication to medicine. He is also recognized as one of the greatest influencers of emotional healing in Nagasaki after the bomb hit- writing 20 different books that helped victims make sense of the war, their grief, and God’s providence in it all. In a speech he was asked to give in November 1945, he beautifully compared Nagasaki and it’s Catholic Urakami to being chosen by God as a pure sacrifice offered to end the war. He says:

“God’s Providence chose Urakami and carried the bomb right above our homes. Is there not a profound relationship between the annihilation of Nagasaki and the end of the war? Was not Nagasaki the chosen victim, the lamb without blemish, slain as a whole burnt offering on an altar of sacrifice, atoning for the sins of all the nations during World War II?”

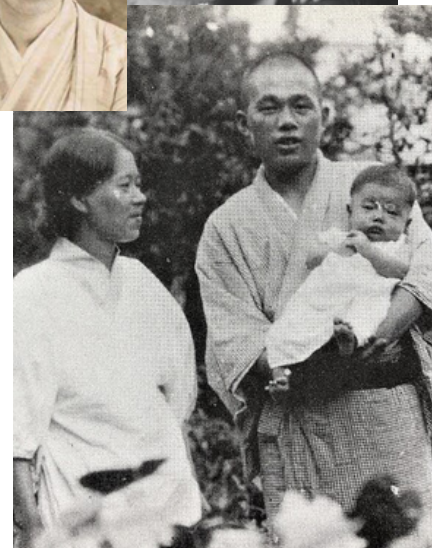
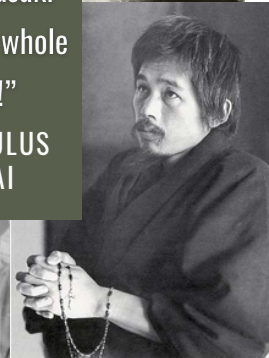
It was this profound thinking that would go on to foster true hope in the aftermath of such loss. Takashi passed away six years later in 1951 from radiation that he had suffered from his medical studies and the bombing. To this day he and his wife are still commemorated in Nagasaki for inspiring hope and healing during times of adversity. May we always choose to live our lives similarly! Svts of God Paulus & Marina... Pray for us!

Servants of God  
Paulus Takashi Nagai &  
Marina Moriyama Midori



“The Lord has given; the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Let us be thankful that Nagasaki was chosen for the whole burnt sacrifice!”

-SVT OF GOD PAULUS  
TAKASHI NAGAI



# The Striving Saint: Resources that Inspire the Road to Sainthood

## FEATURED PODCAST

### ROSARY IN A YEAR

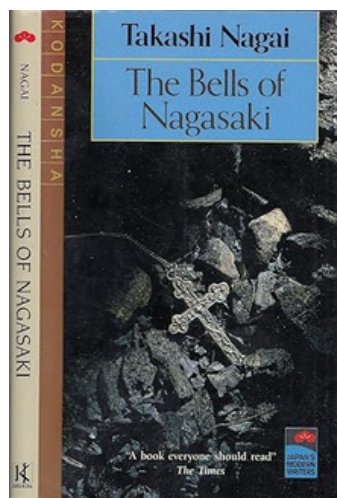
“In Ascension’s Rosary in a Year podcast, Fr. Mark-Mary Ames, CFR, guides listeners in a step-by-step journey that will change the way you pray – no matter where you are in your spiritual life. By starting small and adding on over time, listeners will find themselves falling more in love with this powerful Marian devotion, becoming a source of grace for the whole world.”



## FEATURED BOOK

### THE BELLS OF NAGASAKI BY SERVANT OF GOD TAKASHI NAGAI

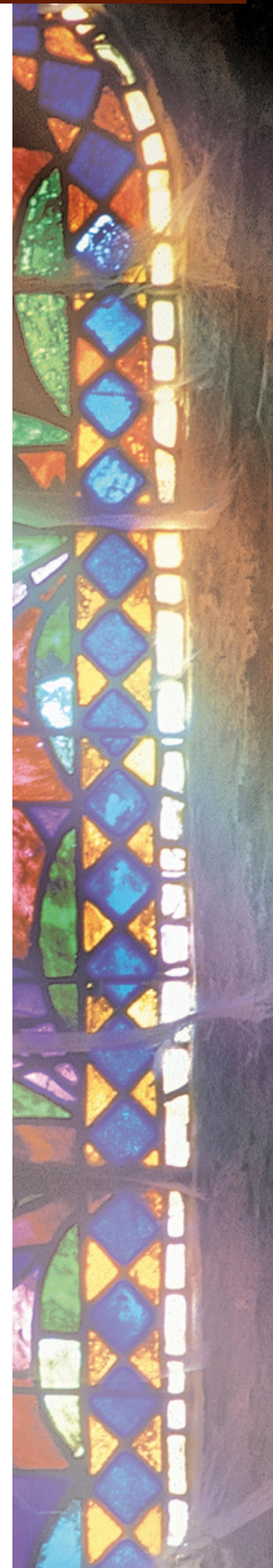
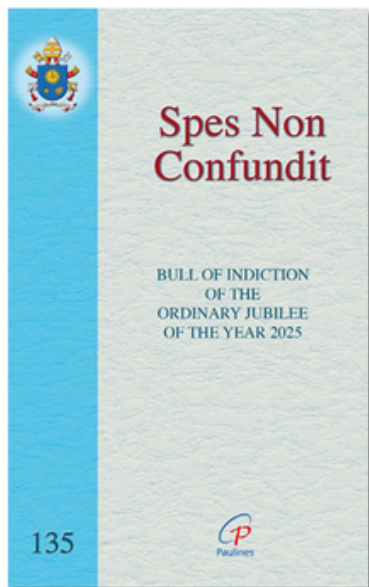
“Among the wounded on the day they dropped the bomb on Nagasaki was a young doctor who, though sick himself cared for the sick and dying. Written when he too lay dying of leukemia, The Bells of Nagasaki is the extraordinary account of his experience. It is deeply moving and human story.”



## FEATURED ENCYCLICAL

### SPES NON CONFUNDIT - BULL OF INDICTION OF THE ORDINARY JUBILEE OF THE YEAR 2025

Welcome the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope by reading Pope Francis’ Encyclical Spes Non Confundit which translates to "Hope does not disappoint". Let us prepare our hearts for a new Jubilee of renewal! For more information on the Jubilee Year click [HERE!](#)





## FEATURED ACTIVITY

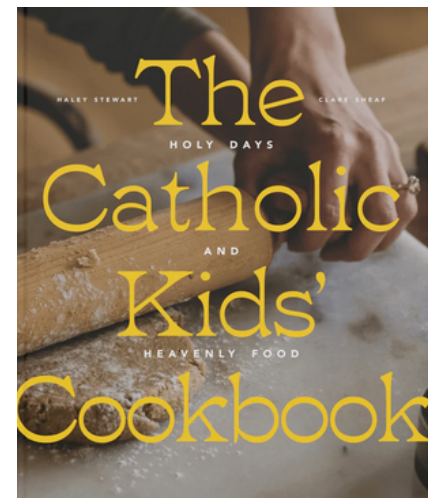
### ST. VALENTINE'S DAY SWEET TREATS BY CATHOLIC ICING

“St. Valentine is one of the most well known Catholic Saints, and the whole world is a fan of his feast day! How could they not be? It’s a great day to celebrate. St. Valentine’s feast day is known for feasting for sure! There’s nothing better than eating some fun love themed treats on this day.” Click [HERE!](#)

## FEATURED BOOK

### THE CATHOLIC KIDS' COOKBOOK: HOLY DAYS AND HEAVENLY FOOD

“This beautiful cookbook is an invitation for families to bring the liturgical year into their homes and grow in their faith. Readers will be introduced to the Church's seasons and holy days with stories of saints and thirty-three recipes. Accompanied by gorgeous photos, sacred art, Scripture, and prayers, this charming cookbook for children ages 6–14 seeks to evangelize with the beauty of the Church's traditions and cultivate the domestic church.”



## FEATURED MOVIE

### THE LION, THE WITCH, & THE WARDROBE

“While playing, Lucy and her siblings find a wardrobe that lands them in a mystical place called Narnia. Here they realize that it was fated and they must now unite with Aslan to defeat an evil queen.”



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## HEAR WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID ABOUT OUR LIFE GIVING WOUNDS RETREAT

“Life Giving Wounds provided me the opportunity to reveal my wounds, especially the trauma of my parent’s separation, to God. The more I uncovered the depths of my wounds with Christ, the more I experienced the depth of the Father’s love for me.”

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♥ **-EVERMORE IN LOVE MARRIED WEEKEND IMMERSION**  
Formerly called the Living in Love retreat, this weekend is packed with insights and exercises that will help you experience the wonder of being more in love! We are excited to see you in person!

♥ -JANUARY 25-26 @ CHRIST THE KING, TOPEKA, KS  
REGISTER [HERE!](#)

♥ **-WORLD MARRIAGE DAY MASS WITH ARCHBISHOP NAUMANN**  
**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9TH, 11AM**

Kick off Big Game Sunday by celebrating marriage at Sacred Heart of Jesus in Shawnee. This Mass fulfills the Sunday obligation. No registration required, light reception to follow.

♥ **-EVERMORE IN LOVE MARRIAGE PREP WEEKEND RETREAT**  
**SAVIOR PASTORAL CENTER - KANSAS CITY, KS**

♥ - APRIL 5-6 @ SAVIOR PASTORAL CENTER - REGISTER [HERE](#)

♥ - MAY 3-4 @ SAVIOR PASTORAL CENTER - REGISTER [HERE!](#)

♥ **-BENEDICTINE COLLEGE NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON MARRIAGE & FAMILY - MARCH 21ST-22ND**

The 2025 Symposium seeks to speak to the gift of the Catholic Church’s teachings on marriage and propose solutions to the challenges facing married couples and families in the contemporary environment. Register [HERE!](#)

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