

“Put Passion Back in Your Marriage”

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“Pray for passion!” But isn’t that sacrilegious? Well, we probably would have said the same thing had it not been a priest who told us. Praying for passion has become precious to us. Why? To fully appreciate why this has become a prayer central to our marriage, join us as we go back almost 25 years to a special weekend in November 1979.

Gil:

My parents invited us to attend a Worldwide Marriage Encounter (WWME) weekend. I was intrigued and excited after seeing how Mom and Dad were present to each other after attending their Weekend. If you knew my parents, you’d agree that it was amazing. After 35 years of marriage, they were acting like newlyweds!

Rose and I had a good marriage and loved each other, but the pressures of life (i.e. the children, jobs and finances) took most of our energy and attention. Like most couples, we got caught up in the whirlwind of the world around us. But off we went to our Marriage Encounter weekend without a clue about what to expect or how our lives would change. That weekend ignited a fire in us to see the beauty and calling of our sacrament of marriage.

Through a lot of sharing of intimate thoughts and feelings, hopes and fears, our love began to overflow once again.

Rose:

I fell in love all over again with my honey and began to listen to him in a wholly new way. The qualities that I had fallen in love with when we first met became stronger than ever. I knew then how I had been taking my lover for granted.

We knew it would take daily prayer, sacrifice, decisions to love, and openness to God’s will, in order for us to be God’s Lights in this world. Our first step was our “yes” to each other on that Weekend. Step by step, we began to share deeply and open our hearts completely to one another. This opened the doors to our passion! Our dream and goal when we first got married was to grow old together and be crazy lovers. Now, we had the tools to keep it going.

The next step was to say “yes” to God, who had called us to see our marriage as a ministry and as our mission to change the world through our love journey. We felt humbled. We were also fearful of falling on our faces. But we also knew that it was okay to fall and get up again.

On a follow up experience, a priest encouraged us to “pray for passion.” Our first Weekend had opened the doors for me to view our sexual relationship as a gift from God and not a marital duty. It took time for me to open my heart, to listen to what God had to say. Our priest said, “You pray for everything else, why not pray for passion?”

I listened closely as he continued: “Ask God to take away your inhibitions and to be totally filled with the love of your spouse. Pray for gentleness and selflessness.” We

trusted his advice and received an amazing, spiritual experience. It was definitely our touch of heaven here on Earth.

Prayer for us then took on a whole new dimension. On our first Marriage Encounter weekend, our journey to pray more often as a couple began. Praying for passion has become a big part of our marital spirituality. We decided that our prayer for passion was going to be even more focused, more deliberate, and more frequent. For us, it meant praying for daylong lovemaking.

In other words, our lovemaking begins first thing in the morning with our morning kiss and a blessing on each other, and it ends when we fall asleep.

It's that passion to truly believe in the power of our love and the graces God has given us. It's that passion in us to be the best marriage sacrament we can be by making choices to heal when we are hurt and to ask for forgiveness.

Gil:

It's taken me a long time to see and understand the fullness of the priest's words in asking us to pray for passion. But I have come to believe that he was not only talking about our sexual oneness. He wanted us to experience that complete joy God wants for us. Our prayer for passion includes sex and also so much more. It is a prayer for our *total* relationship. It is a prayer for passion to reflect God's love in all that we do, and *to do it in God's name*.

Praying for passion together has brought playfulness into our lives as well. I recall how not too long ago, when Rose and I were coming out of the grocery store, I decided to pick Rose up and carry her to the car! We were both laughing and screaming and I'm sure people around us thought we were crazy. And you know what? We are. We are crazy in love with one another, and we are crazily and passionately in love with the Worldwide Marriage Encounter mission to renew the church and change the world!

Gil and Rose:

We believe that the transformation that began on our Weekend also triggered a transformation of love and joy throughout our family. Our children think we are crazy and they love it.

As we reflect on our journey in marriage and the richness that "praying for passion" has brought to us, we are in awe of God's love for all of us. As sacramental couples and priests who are called to reflect God's love to a hurting world, we need all kinds of prayer in our lives, including the "prayer for passion."

Here we are in 2004, married 35 years, with four children and six grandchildren, and we are more in love with each other than we have ever been. We thank God for answering our prayer for passion!