

Celebrating your Anniversary At Home - April 10-19, 2020

Wedding Anniversary Mass celebrations with the Bishop of the Diocese of Manchester have occurred for more than thirty years. The Masses were long held in the Abbey Church of Saint Anselm College in Manchester, NH. In recent years, under the direction of Bishop Peter Libasci the celebrations occurred in the Mother Church of the Diocese, Saint Joseph Cathedral in Manchester.

These events truly are highlights in the work I am privileged to do as Director of Family Life Ministries. They are also meaningful to me personally as my wife, Emily, and I had the honor of celebrating five years of marriage at an anniversary Mass in 2018. We were thrilled to give thanks for our marriage with Bishop Libasci and with so many faithful and faith-filled couples. There was even a few couples in attendance celebrating more than seventy years of marriage!

Did you know that if you add up all the years of lived marriage for a typical anniversary Mass the sum is always well into the thousands? Just think: that is thousands of years of Catholic marriage and family life! These occasions are joyful, powerful testimonies to the beauty, diversity, and richness of marriage in Christ.

That is why it is so hard for us to forgo this spring's celebration, previously scheduled for Divine Mercy Sunday, April 19, 2020. With gatherings restricted to 10 or fewer persons and Masses closed to the general public throughout New Hampshire due to the COVID-19 virus, we are sadly unable to celebrate with you in person. But, that does not mean we cannot celebrate together!

I am pleased to provide you with this resource in recognition of your significant wedding anniversary. Here you have a few different ways to honor your marriage: by spending quality time together as a couple; in prayer and thanksgiving to God; with meaningful conversation; and perhaps a sweet treat (I've included - with permission - my great grandmother's recipe for Italian Anise-Flavored Cookies, a staple at our family table during the Christmas and Easter seasons).

As you go through the pages of this resource, know that hundreds of couples from around the diocese look on with you. We may not be together under the roof of the cathedral, but through our prayers, we are together as One Body in Christ. Thank you for your ongoing witness to the dignity of the Sacrament of Matrimony, and may God bless us all as we await the moment when we can gather again around the Eucharistic table.

Sincerely,

Derek McDonald

Director, Family Life Ministries; Respect Life

Celebrating your anniversary at home: it's as easy as "1, 2, 3"!

1. Click the link below to access a beautiful novena (9-day prayer) for married couples. Follow the instructions in the novena, praying every day from April 10 through April 18. Take a few minutes after reciting it with one another to reflect on its contents.
 - a. https://odnmedia.s3.amazonaws.com/files/Marriage%20Novena_No%20Crops20150417-152136.pdf
2. On Sunday, April 19, pray in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, however you have become accustomed to during this time without its public celebration (there are a few links below to help in this regard). Then, at 2:00 pm pray the enclosed "Prayer of a Couple on the Anniversary of Marriage" (below) knowing that hundreds of married couples from around the diocese are praying with you.
 - a. Sunday Mass Readings & Prayers: <https://www.keepthelordsday.com/sunday-mass-and-prayers>
 - b. Livestreamed Masses in NH: <https://www.catholicnh.org/community/outreach/health-care/coronavirus/livestreamed-masses/>
 - c. Recorded Masses from CatholicTV: <http://www.catholictv.org/masses/catholictv-mass>
3. Continue to celebrate your anniversary and the Easter season by spending some more quality time together baking and enjoying Italian Anise-Flavored Cookies. See recipe on the page 3.

Prayer of a Couple on the Anniversary of Marriage*

We praise you, O God, we bless you,
Creator of all things, who in the beginning
made man and woman that they might
form a communion of life and love.

We also give you thanks for graciously
blessing our family life so that it might
present an image of Christ's union with the
Church.

Therefore look with kindness upon us
today, and as you have sustained our
communion amid joys and struggles,
renew our Marriage covenant each day,
increase our charity, and strengthen in us
the bond of peace, so that we may for ever
enjoy your blessing. Through Christ our
Lord

Amen.

*Text adapted from the English translation of The Order of Celebrating Matrimony © 2013, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved. Accessed online at: <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/prayers-and-devotions/prayers/anniversary-of-marriage.cfm> . This form is not approved for liturgical use.

Italian Anise-Flavored Cookies

Yields about 35 cookies

Recipe courtesy of Kate Abbatessa

Ingredients

- **Cookies**
 - 3 1/3 cups flour
 - 1 cup sugar
 - ½ cup butter, melted & cooled to room temp.
 - 1/3 cup milk
 - 1 tbs anise extract
 - 1 tsp vanilla (optional)
 - ½ tsp salt
 - 2 eggs (room temp)
 - 1 tsp baking soda
 - 2 tsp baking powder
- **Icing**
 - 3 cups powdered sugar
 - 1/3 cup milk or half-and-half
 - 1 tsp anise extract
- **Finishing**
 - multi-colored nonpareils

Instructions

- Preheat oven to 375
- Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper
- In a medium bowl, combine flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt
- In a large bowl, beat eggs, adding butter and sugar slowly. Add anise extract and mix well.
- Gradually add milk and flour mixture to egg mixture until all are just combined
- Scoop the dough into two-inch rounds. Smooth tops of cookies with a wet finger before baking if desired.
- Bake for around 8 minutes. The bottoms will be just golden-brown when done.
- Once cookies have cooled, make icing by adding anise extract to powdered sugar in a small bowl, slowly adding and mixing in milk or half-and-half to ensure the frosting is not too thin.
- Dip cookies in icing to and quickly sprinkle with nonpareils

In 2017, we asked Wedding Anniversary Mass participants to tell us the key ingredient to their joyful Christian marriages. Here are a few of their responses.

"Encourage each other, patience, have at least one activity enjoyed together."

"Do everything with Love and Trust in God. Treat each other as you wish to be treated."

"Compromise - always put your spouse's happiness first. Share everything - especially ice cream."



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