

Homily (silver wedding)

There is a huge fortress on a hill overlooking the town of Weinsberg in Germany. One day, way back in feudal times, the fortress was surrounded by the enemy. The commander of the enemy troops agreed to let all the women and children leave the fortress. He also agreed to allow each woman take her most valuable possession with her. Imagine the amazement and frustration of the commander when he saw each woman leave the fortress with her husband on her back.

Now for Mary to carry Tommy on her back might be overdoing it but I'm sure after 50 years they carry each other in their hearts which is a nice way of putting it.

When Mr and Mrs Henry Ford celebrated their golden wedding anniversary, a reporter asked them, 'To what do you attribute 50 years of successful married life?' 'The formula,' said Ford 'is the same formula I have always used in making cars - just stick to the one model.' Mary and Tommy have indeed done that.

To be married 50 years is something to celebrate for Mary and Tommy themselves and indeed their family but it is also a powerful witness to the community of what commitment in marriage is all about. We, as a parish needs to celebrate that.

When a couple first get married, they are beginning a journey. As in the case of Mary and Tommy the ups and downs, joys and sorrows of that journey over the years will have led them into a more enriching union.

A fair amount of water has flown under the bridge since that special day in 1968. Over the 50 years each has taken something from the other and each has given something to the other. As Scripture says the two become one. When children come on the scene the love of husband and wife matures even more and extends to their offspring.

The Parish, for instance, here at St Vincent's would be all the poorer without your involvement over the years. This refers principally to their commitment to the Church.

The love of God for us celebrated in the Eucharist each week overflows into family life. But the opposite is also true - the love between husband, wife and children overflows into the Parish community and enriches it immeasurably. It's lovely to see so many young families at Mass here every Sunday.

Questioning the children for confirmation, the Bishop asked one nervous little 10 year old girl, 'What is matrimony. She paused and then answered, 'a place where some souls suffer for a time on account of their sins'. No, no, said the Parish priest, 'that's Purgatory.' 'Let her alone,' said the Bishop, she may be right'. What do you and I know about it anyway. Bearing that in mind it's safer for me to quit while I'm ahead.

On behalf of the Parish of St Vincent's, I would like to offer Tommy and Mary our warmest and heartiest congratulations on this happy occasion of their Golden Jubilee and will look forward to the day when they will celebrate their Diamond. *Ad multos Annos.*