



### **REMOTE PREPARATION**

**Tomorrow is always a day  
away...until it's today**

When we think about marriage preparation, we typically focus on the immediate preparation necessary to determine the parties' freedom to marry. Yet, in its wisdom, canon law urges pastoral ministers to begin preparing people for marriage long before that: "Pastors of souls are obliged to take care that their ecclesiastical community offers the Christian faithful the assistance by which the matrimonial state is preserved in a Christian spirit and advances in perfection. This assistance must be offered especially by: preaching, catechesis adapted to minors, youth, and adults, and even the use of instruments of social communication, by which the faithful are instructed about the meaning of marriage and about the function of Christian spouses and parents" (canon 1063).

The purpose of this remote preparation is to cultivate a true understanding of marriage among the faithful so they can responsibly discern if they are called to that vocation. As anyone who has worked with young couples preparing for marriage can attest, their understanding of marriage, influenced by the prevailing secular culture, can be sorely lacking. If I may borrow some wisdom from another field, the tremendous insights of football commentator, Greg Olsen, may help explain what is happening in our culture today and what we can do about it. Drawing on his experience as a former tight end, Olsen describes two different mentalities: a center's mentality, and second down mentality.

The center's job is to snap the ball and start the play, but if he becomes so focused on that single moment without looking at the big picture and what it will take to make the whole play work, it could easily fall apart, ending with a fumble or a penalty. Young couples often approach marriage with a center's mentality, so focused on the immediate moment of their engagement and wedding they never step back to think about the big picture, married

life, and what it will take to make it work. This too can end in disaster as, after the honeymoon, the reality of married life hits and they are unprepared to face it.

What couples need is second down mentality. When it's fourth down, most football teams automatically give up. They figure they won't make first down, so they punt the ball away. Unfortunately, many couples approach their marriage the same way. When things get tough, they give up and leave the marriage. Second down mentality means not giving up. When faced with the difficulties of fourth down, those with second down mentality don't act as if the possession is already over but like it's only second down and they are just getting started, ready to fight for every yard to win the game. Good remote preparation helps young couples overcome a center's mentality and live their married life with second down mentality. That's it for now. Until next time, keep the faith, love God's people, and always honor the code!

