

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK



75 YEARS AND GOING STRONG...

I want to tell you about a wonderful couple in Saint Charles Parish who I have come to know and love in the two and half years I have been here. Joe and Marion Scaramuzzo live on Oak Avenue and usually on Tuesday afternoons I bring them Holy Communion. This Tuesday, February 13th, Joe and Marion are celebrating their Seventy-Fifth Wedding Anniversary! What a great achievement! I don't even think you can find a card in a card store that goes as high as 75 for an anniversary.

Joe is 96 years old and Marion a year younger. Actually they met when they were just fifteen years old and it was love at first sight! On February 13, 1943, Joe and Marion were married at the Chapel in Fort McClellan, Alabama. It was during World War II and Joe was serving in the United States Army. Marion travelled down to Alabama, got married, stayed with Joe for two weeks and then returned to Staten Island-it was war time and things were a lot different than they are now.

After Joe came home from service, the couple settled first in South Beach and then in the 1960's right here in Oakwood Heights where they became part of Saint Charles Parish. Joe was a sanitation worker and Marion was a homemaker. Together they raised a wonderful family of three kids, Joe, Jim, and Doug. There are now seven grandkids and nine great grandkids.

Joe has a wonderful talent for music and sometimes when I come over he is playing the trumpet. He plays trumpet at the senior center that he and Marion go to at Carmel Richmond. I asked Joe and Marion for permission to write about their married life and they agreed. I think their devotion to each other for three quarters of a century is extraordinary.

Currently, as many of us are aware, a good number of couples don't make it to their Silver Anniversary much less their Diamond one! I asked Marion if she had some advice for young couples entering married life today. She said, "Yes, keep your mouth shut!" Well, that's not such bad advice for anyone of us-married, religious or single! But I think that the foundation of their marriage lies in the fact that they truly love each other and took their vows seriously.

This week on February 14th, we celebrate Valentine's Day-unfortunately it's on Ash Wednesday this year-so no candy at least for me! We all know that the symbol for Valentine's Day is that big red heart which has come to symbolize love. However, love is more than just a red heart or a box of candy and bouquet of flowers, as nice as those things are in the long run, true love for another person means sacrifice.

Someone said to me a few years ago, "Father love is blind; marriage is the eye opener!" Yes. For some people their eyes are opened after marriage and then they want out! But for true love to be the real item it must move beyond 'the Honeymoon stage' and mature into something deeper and permanent.

The late Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen used to say, "there are only two words in the vocabulary of love-'You,' and 'Always.'" What that means is that each person in a relationship is loved for himself or herself and not in a selfish way. Secondly, that love should be enduring-until always! I think that Joe and Marion Scaramuzzo discovered that the secret of how to make a marriage work and it's no secret-seventy five years of wedded bliss is the proof!

Sincerely in Christ,
Father Jerome