Diocese launches Marriage for Life campaign

On Oct. 22-23, the same weekend on which we celebrate the feast day of St. Pope John Paul II, the “Marriage and Family Life Pope,” I would like to launch officially a new diocesan campaign called Marriage for Life. It is a car window decal and prayer campaign.

The dual meaning of the decal is obvious—marriage is meant to be lived for the whole of life and for the purpose of having and raising children as is revealed in the book of Genesis, which speaks so beautifully of the original unity of man and woman and their call to bring forth new life.

For this campaign, I would ask you to consider placing a decal on the back window of your car to support and proclaim your belief that marriage is for life. Please share these decals with your friends, family and anyone of goodwill wishing to support the permanence and fruitfulness of marriage.

You might be asking: “Why a window decal campaign?” If you are like me, when I am stopped at a red light, I read and react to car bumper stick- ers and decals. You probably have your favorite car decals you have seen around town.

The Marriage for Life decal is a great way to send a positive message to your fellow travelers about what you believe. Pope Francis asks every Christian to go to the fringes and invite people with our witness. The pope’s message is to go where the people are. I can think of a better place than the street itself!

By placing a window decal on your car, you might generate thinking about the nature of marriage and its purposes. Someone might stop and ask you why you have that decal on your car. Or you might see another car with the same sticker and honk or wave or give a big thumbs up. In our world of short attention spans, the quick message of a car decal is the perfect way to witness to others. An image speaks 1,000 words, and hopefully it will encourage and strengthen some hearts.

Many of you may know that before I became a priest, I worked as a professional graphic designer. The window decal itself depicts a couple who form the trunk of a tree, which shows their unity and difference. Sprouting from the branches of the tree are leaves which represent the children.

The Marriage for Life symbol represents the permanence and fruitfulness of married life as an unbreakable bond.

The heart represents love—the love of the couple, family and the love of Christ.

The trunk shows unity and complementarity of the couple in marriage.

The limbs express our need to let go and reach out to God with open arms.

The leaves represent children and new growth. Like leaves, children collect light and produce food for the whole tree.

MARRIAGE FOR LIFE

God of Blessing, God of Love, in this lifelong covenant of marriage, may we always be aware of your presence. May our home be filled with the light and goodness that comes from you.

May our marriage become the gift to the world you intend it to be.

May our joy in each other be abundant as your joy is abundant in us.

May our family reflect the image of your absolute and unfailing love.

Through all trials and blessings of family life, may we turn and surrender to you in every moment, growing stronger in the faith, hope, and love that binds us ever closer to you.

Grant that we may nurture in each other grace and wisdom, rooted in you while daily growing toward your heavenly kingdom.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

MARRIAGE FOR LIFE PRAYER

May our marriage become the gift to the whole world.

Grant that we may nurture, in each other, grace and wisdom, rooted in you while daily growing toward the heavenly kingdom.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.