In my work as a pastoral associate, I frequently speak with couples preparing for marriage. They often ask for suggestions about readings and desire to have something a little unconventional. When I ask what they mean, they will say something like, “We’ve heard that love reading so many times, and some of the Gospel readings we have heard aren’t what we want to say.” I ask them what they think love is and, after a pause, they begin to tell me what they believe about love. It usually includes words like patient, humble, wanting the good of the other. We look at the reading from Corinthians again and they suddenly understand why so many choose it. It is one of the more beautiful descriptions of love that we have, and the love Paul describes is grounded in the Lord—God’s love for us and the love we must have for each other.

I think the ending of the passage is of greatest importance to marriage and the Christian life. Marriage is a process of becoming known. We “put aside childish things,” like unrealistic notions of romantic love, and work at loving a real person. Spouses begin their marriage knowing each other only partially but grow in understanding with each passing day. That wisdom leads to unity and transforms the spouses. This movement mirrors our life with God. We know very little as baptized infants and children. But as we pray, worship, and serve, we come to know God more until we meet him face to face and our lives are one with his.

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A Word From Pope Francis

“Marriage is the icon of God’s love for us. Indeed, God is communion too: the three Persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit live eternally in perfect unity. And this is precisely the mystery of Matrimony: God makes of the two spouses one single life.”

—General Audience, April 2, 2014