



INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN FAMILY MOVEMENTS

Mission San Jose



THE TESTIMONY OF THE BEAUTY AND JOY OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

NAME: **John F. Ward, Jr. & Jule D. Ward**
PLACE OF RESIDENCE: **New Carlisle, Indiana, USA**
MARRIED YEARS: **50 years**



HOW MANY CHILDREN HAVE: We were blessed with four beautiful children, three girls and a boy. Kristin, our oldest daughter, and Johnny, our son and our youngest, appeared at birth to be completely normal. But by the time they were nine months old, it began to be apparent that they had physical and developmental challenges. Throughout the course of their lives serious physical and mental limitations hindered their ability to participate in mainstream childhood and adult activities. God called Johnny back to him in May, 2007. Kristin was called home this past February. Their sisters, Carrie and Betsy, normally abled in every way, are also young women of enormous compassion and understanding.

HOW MANY GRANDCHILDREN: We have two delightful grandchildren. Our daughter Betsy and her husband Richard have a son Bryce, age 13. Bryce is a true “Renaissance” kid. He is fascinated by all the wonders of God’s world and by all human endeavors. He is very excited about the upcoming World Meeting of Families. Our daughter Carrie and her husband Dave have a daughter Evelyn, age 6. Evelyn loves beauty. She notices it everywhere. She loves to draw and will concentrate on a single drawing for hours at a time.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE JUST MARRIED LOVE AND NOW?

When we were first married our love was much more physical than now. That’s not saying it was more passionate because now it is actually more passionate in that we are utterly devoted to one another’s happiness and well being with an intensity we were not capable of generating in our early twenties.

WHAT ARE THE VALUES AND ATTITUDES YOU THINK HAVE KEPT YOU UNITED AND HAPPY THROUGH YOUR MARRIAGE?

First of all, we are believers. Our relationship to God is important to both of us. It is the foundation for everything else. Second, we are committed to marriage as the central institution of society and to our own marriage in particular. Our love for each other is our rock in every storm. Third, doing whatever it takes to keep the family wholly connected has always guided our major decisions. Four, we surround ourselves with people of faith and persons with high values so that together we can seek the good of all of God’s people.

“Let the Holy Spirit guide the mission of proclaiming the Gospel of marriage, family and life in the world”



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MENTION TWO UNFORGETTABLE MOMENTS IN YOUR LOVE STORY.

The first momentous moment for us was when after four years of struggling to conceive, our doctor told us we were expecting our first child. We must have telephoned a hundred people. There are many more, but one to mention is when we chose to celebrate our 50th anniversary just the two of us by staying in Lincoln Park in Chicago. It was like being on a second honeymoon.

MENTION WHICH HAVE BEEN THE MOST DIFFICULT MOMENT IN YOUR MARRIAGE AND HOW DID YOU FACE IT?

For us the difficult “moment” was four-fold. It is a blend of the times, we realized that we needed first for Kristy, then seven years later, for Johnny, to choose a residential school for them to stay during the week in order to have the most therapeutic program possible for persons with their disabilities. Letting go of such a vulnerable family member even when it is best for them and you will have them home again frequently is frightening and heartbreaking. But even harder was the leave taking required of us when God called his precious children home to him after sharing them with us for more years than we ever thought possible.

SHARE WHAT HAS WORKED TO YOU TO KEEP YOUR MARRIAGE FOR SO MANY YEARS.

We always say a little jokingly that eating breakfast together has been the secret of our marriage. But in reality this practice has always been a core tradition for us. We eat before or after the family, depending on the day. We communicate about what the day will be. We feel like we start off on the “right foot.” We never actually chose this habit; it chose us. That, we believe, is why it works so well.

SHARE THREE RECOMMENDATIONS (ADVICES) YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND STARTING MARRIAGES.

1. Own from the beginning that this covenant is truly “until death, do us part.” There will be BAD times. That is why you are together, to get through them. Renew this commitment frequently.
2. Hug and kiss every day, let your children see you being affectionate. So what if they are embarrassed? Hold hands. Snuggle, etc.
3. Don't worry about things you don't have. You've already won the lottery. You found each other.