

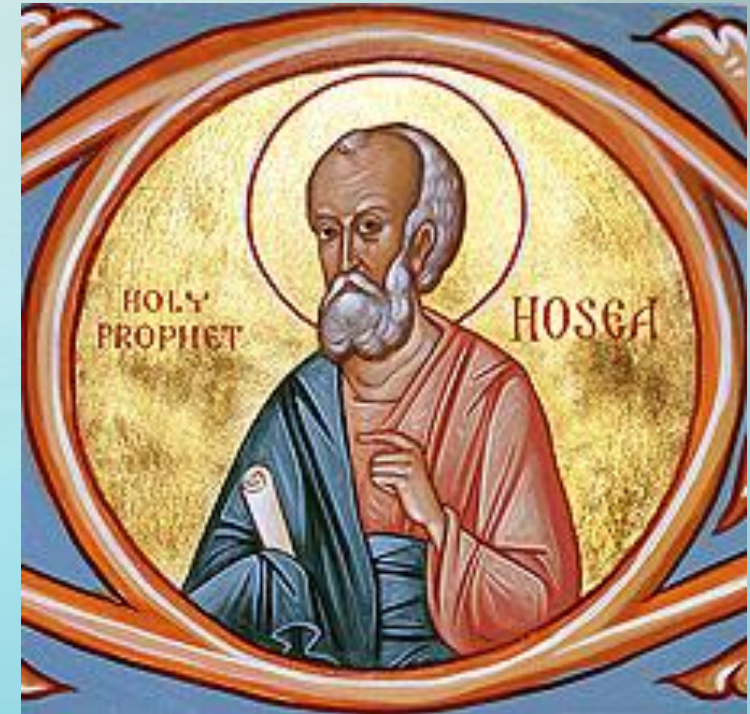


Hosea

A Love Story:
God's Enduring Love for an
Unfaithful People

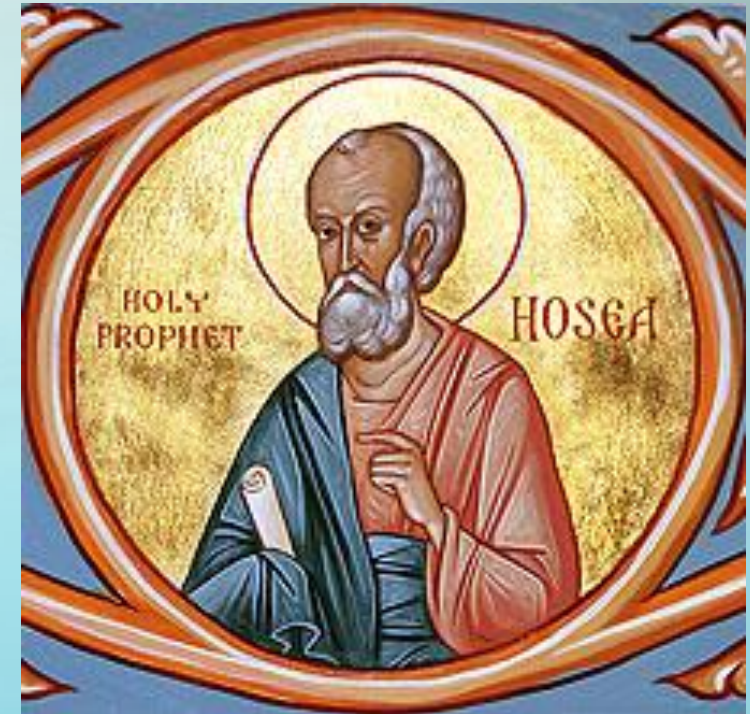
Introduction

- Overview
- Context
- Language Challenges
- Structure
- Author/Development
- Hosea and Chapter 1:1 – 2:3
- Image of Marriage



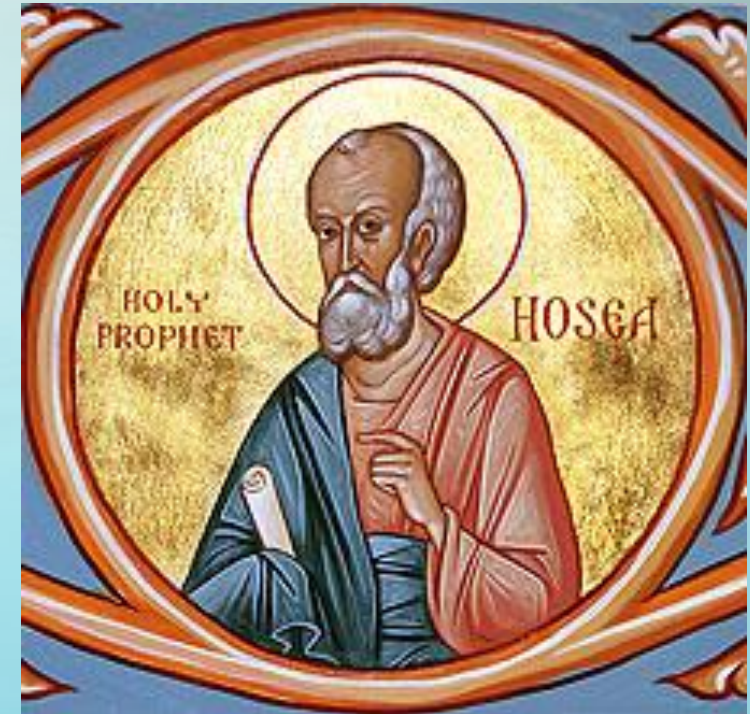
Overview

- Hosea – “YHWH has rescued”
- The only writing prophet who was raised in and prophesized in the northern kingdom of Israel (Amos was from Judah)
- What we know of Hosea is found in the prophet’s text
- Hosea felt deeply - anger and tenderness



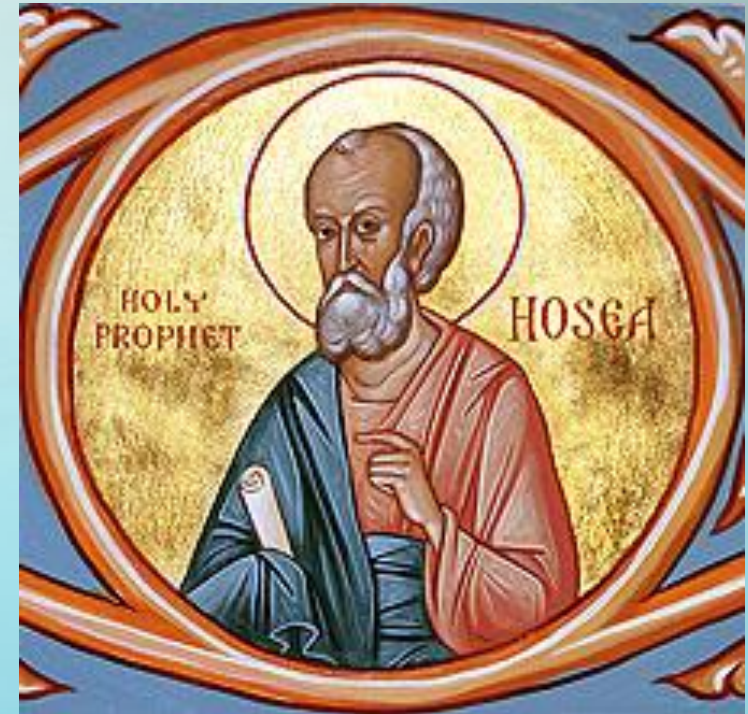
Context

- Prophesized in the 8th century BC: 750s – 710s
- Difficult to specifically place the time of the prophet's message
- Political
- Economic
- Religious



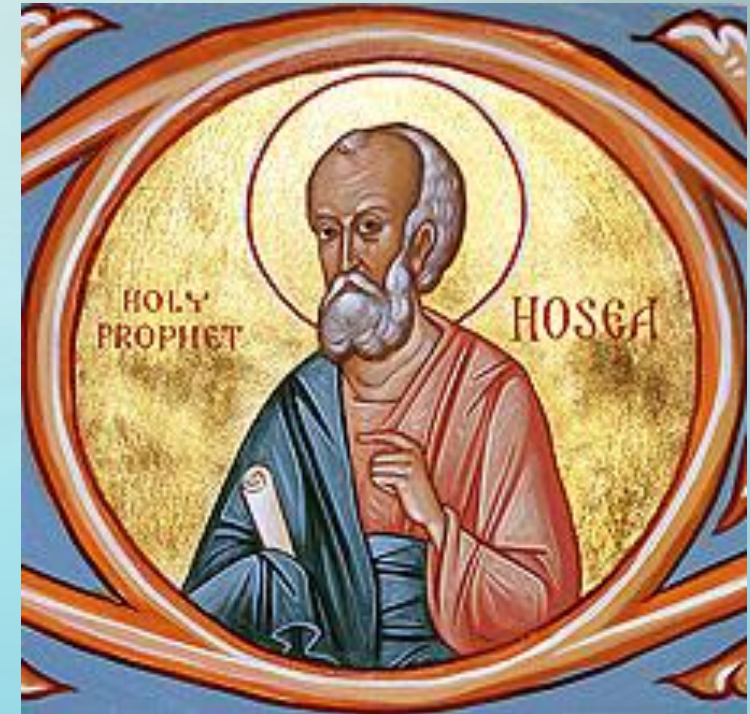
Political - Context

- Kings (not appointed by God) advanced through seeking opportunity
- Less about pleasing God, more about pleasing the king
- Sought strength and protection from neighboring kingdoms through alliances and deals
- Lack of trust God!



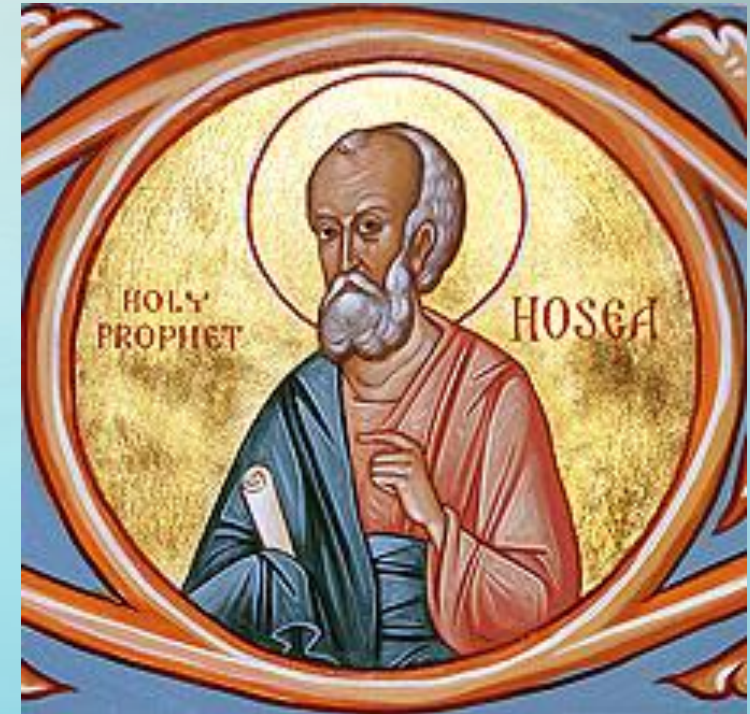
Economic - Context

- Landowners & Poor: “2 Classes”
- Assyrian takeover – Israel had to pay huge tributes to Assyria
- Forced the poor into working harder and longer - Poor only getting poorer
- Forgot to look out for the poor...
- Lack of obedience to God!



Religious - Context

- Polytheism and syncretism
- Baal – bringer of rain, thus the fertility connection; sexual acts performed in Baal’s temple was thought to “contribute” to fertility
- Many sought the blessing of both religions
- Israel has failed to keep the covenant!



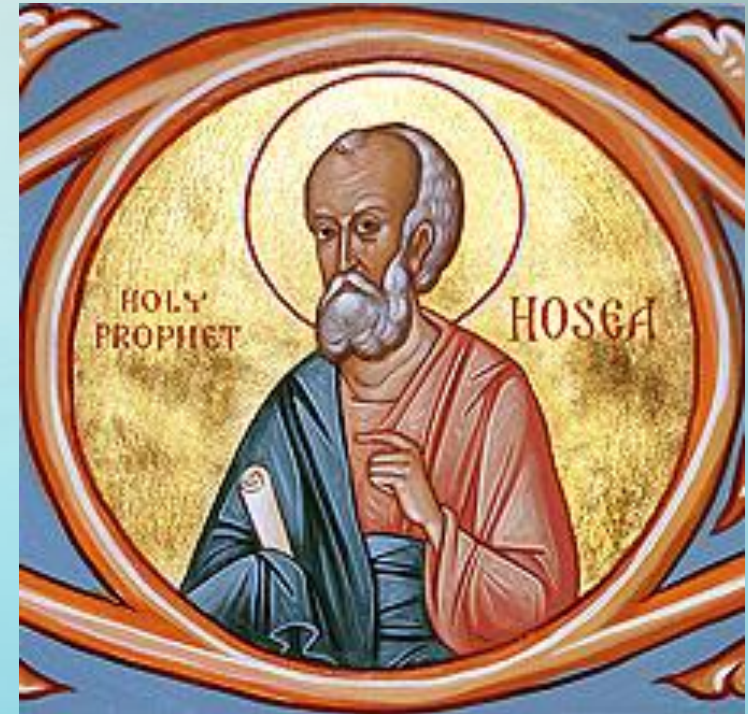
Language Challenges

- Hebrew text of Hosea offers more problems than any Old Testament book except Job
- Dialects distinct from other books
- Seemingly a “series of fragments”
- Text is ungrammatical, elliptical, and uses rare words – among other challenges



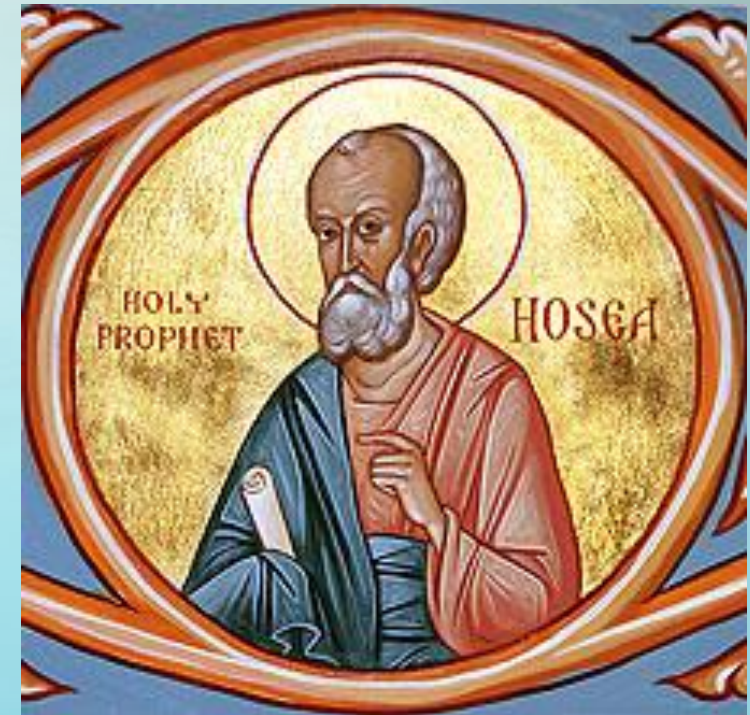
Structure

- The Book of the Prophet Hosea is divided into two main sections:
 - Chapters 1-3: the marriage of Hosea and Gomer
 - Chapters 4-14: Israel's sins and God's response
- The prophetic oracles are not clearly defined
- Structure of Hosea rather unique



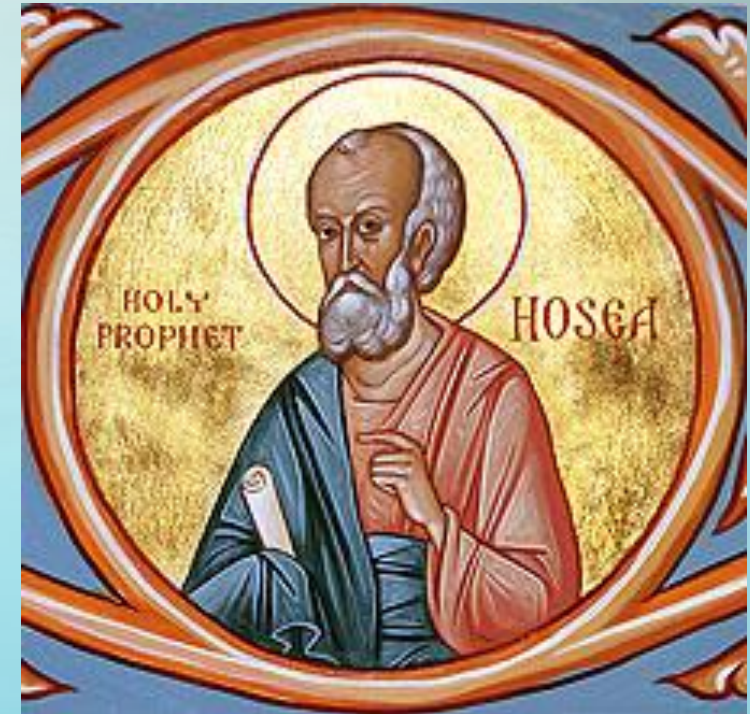
Structure

- 1:1 – 3:5 – Hosea's marriage
 - Messages of Hope – 1:10-2:1; 2:15-23; 3:5
- 4:1 – 11:11 – Israel's sins
 - Message of Hope – 11:10-11
- 11:12 – 14:3 – Israel's history of sin and God's enduring love
 - Message of Hope – 14:4-9
- 14:10 – Wisdom epilogue



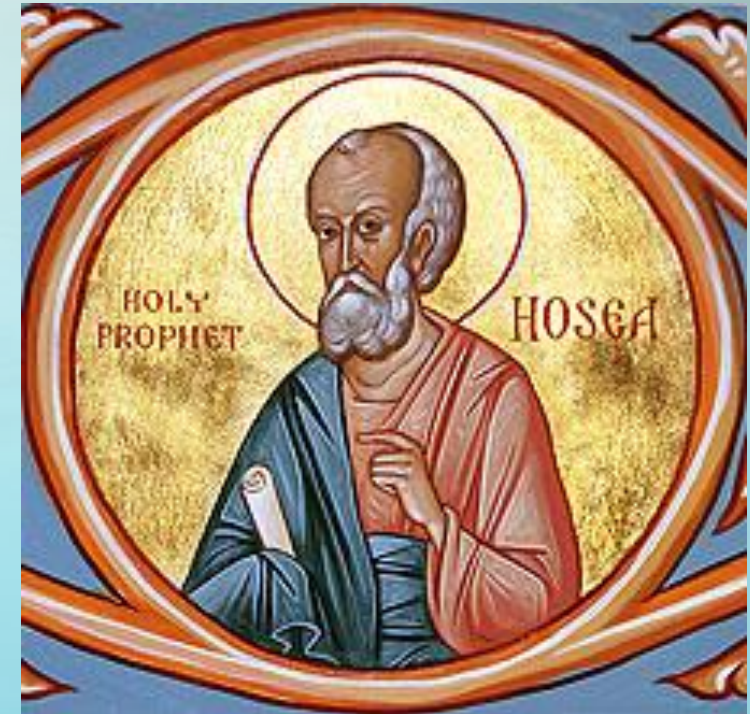
Authorship / Development

- Written by Hosea or scribes
- Appears to be in chronological order
- With the destruction of Samaria in 722/721 BC – Hosea or his writings went south into Judah
- It was there the compilation took place, perhaps with some redaction



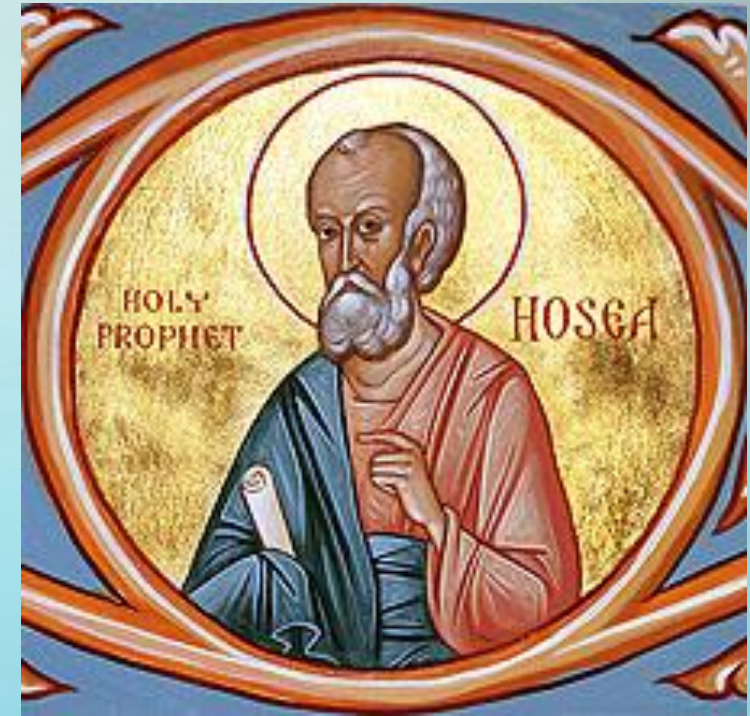
Hosea and Chapters 1 – 2:3

- Hosea instructed to take a wife
- Harlot, prostitute, whore...
 - Not necessarily before they were wed
 - Perhaps a cult prostitute – devoted to Baal: fertility god
- Married Gomer
 - Scandal!
- A unique and incredible calling!



Hosea and Chapters 1 – 2:3

- Hosea: Israel is bound to God by the covenant given to Moses
 - I am your God and you are my people
- Israel turns its back on God through idolatry...
- Hosea reflects on his relationship with Gomer - as symbolic of God and Israel



Hosea and Chapters 1 – 2:3

- Children of Gomer
- Children of Harlotry
 - Unknown father(s)??
- Jezreel: valley where “the bow of Israel is broken”
 - Prophecy soon fulfilled
- Lo-ruhama: “she is not pitied”
- Lo-ammi: “not my people”

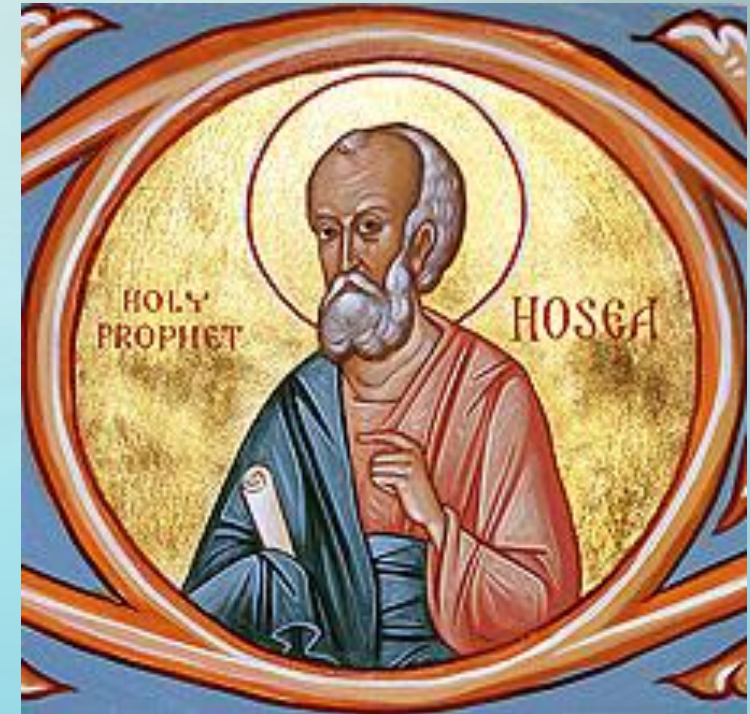


Image of Marriage

The image of marriage as God's relationship with His people - found in later Scripture

“As a young man marries a virgin, so your Builder shall marry you” ~ Is. 62:5 (past Sunday's 1st reading)

Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?” ~ Mk. 2:19 (yesterday's Gospel)

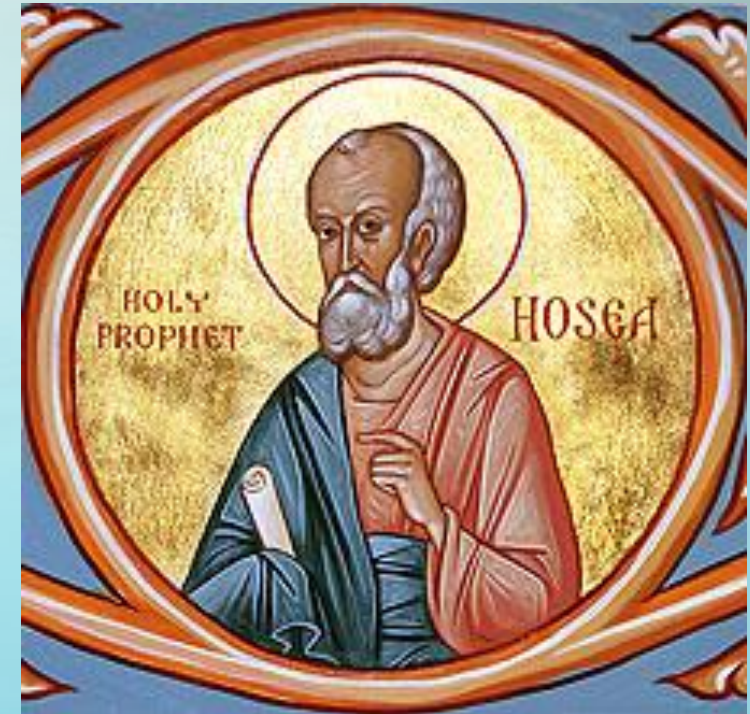


Image of Marriage

Consider St. Paul:

“Husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her ”

~Eph. 5:25

“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife... I speak in reference to Christ and the church.” ~ Eph.

5:31-32

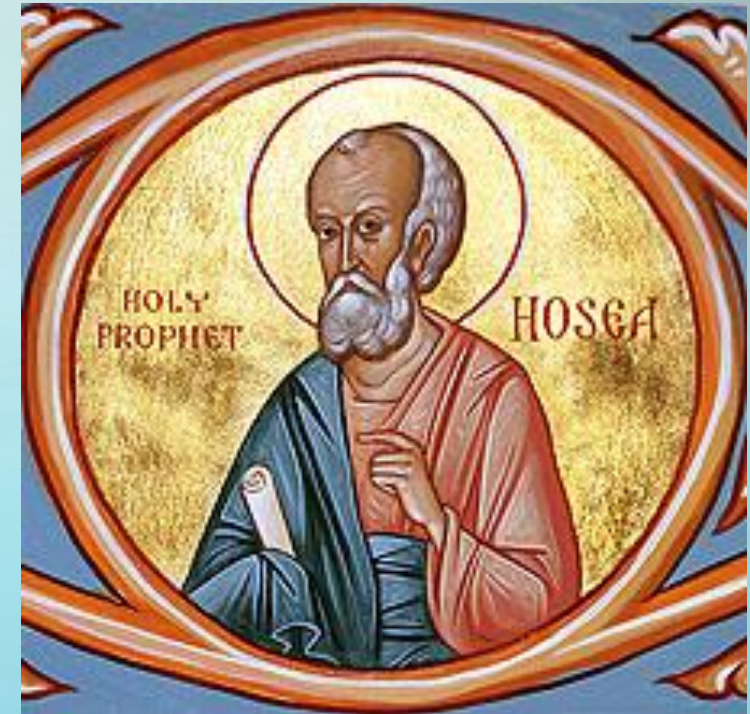
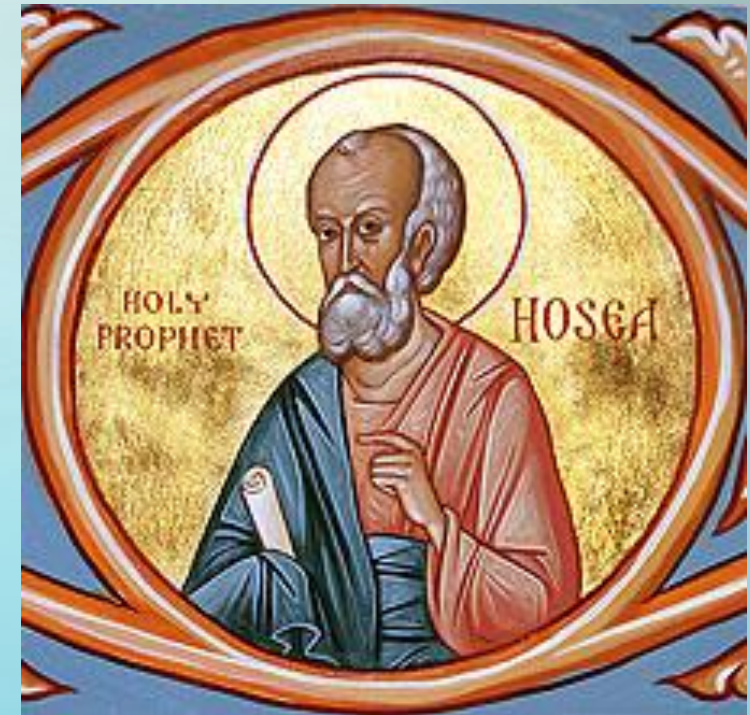


Image of Marriage

The Bible begins with the creation of man and women – and weds them: “bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh” ~ Genesis

Remember the Song of Songs!

The Bible ends with the image of marriage: “the Spirit and the bride say, “Come”” ~ Rev. 22:17



Religious Life – Married to Christ



Relationship of Intimacy

Growth in Holiness - Stages of the Spiritual Growth:

- Purgative, Illuminative, Unitive

St. Teresa of Avila – speaks of the spiritual betrothal in the seventh mansion

- The soul's essential mission is the journey to be united to God



Relationship of Intimacy

Essentially there are only two things a person can do:

- Total surrender to God
- Embrace God's will



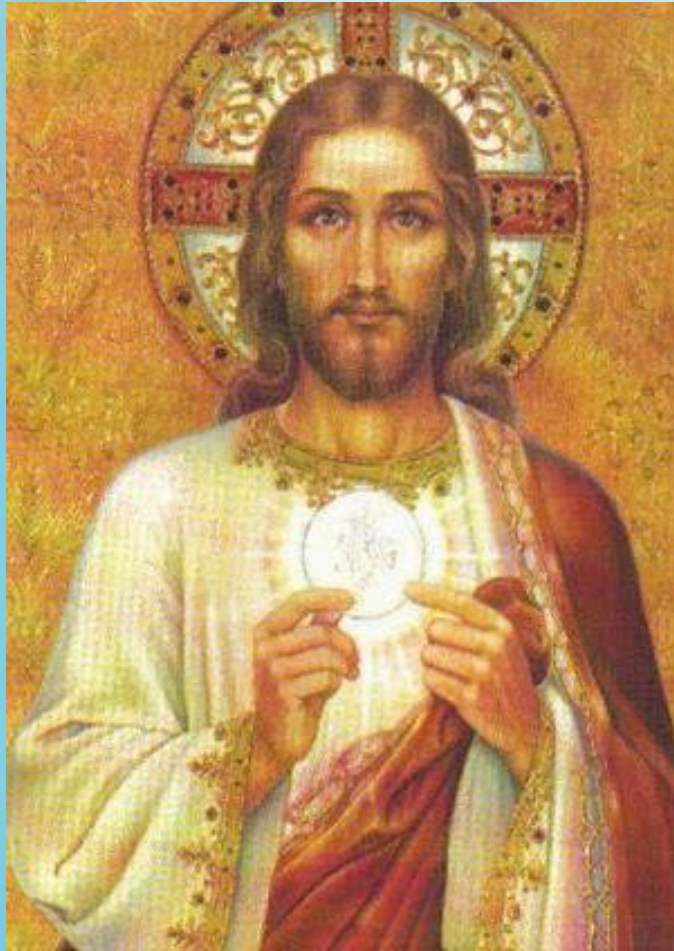
Relationship of Intimacy

St. Teresa of Avila:

Obstacle to growth in holiness is the disbelief that one is called to a deep union with God.

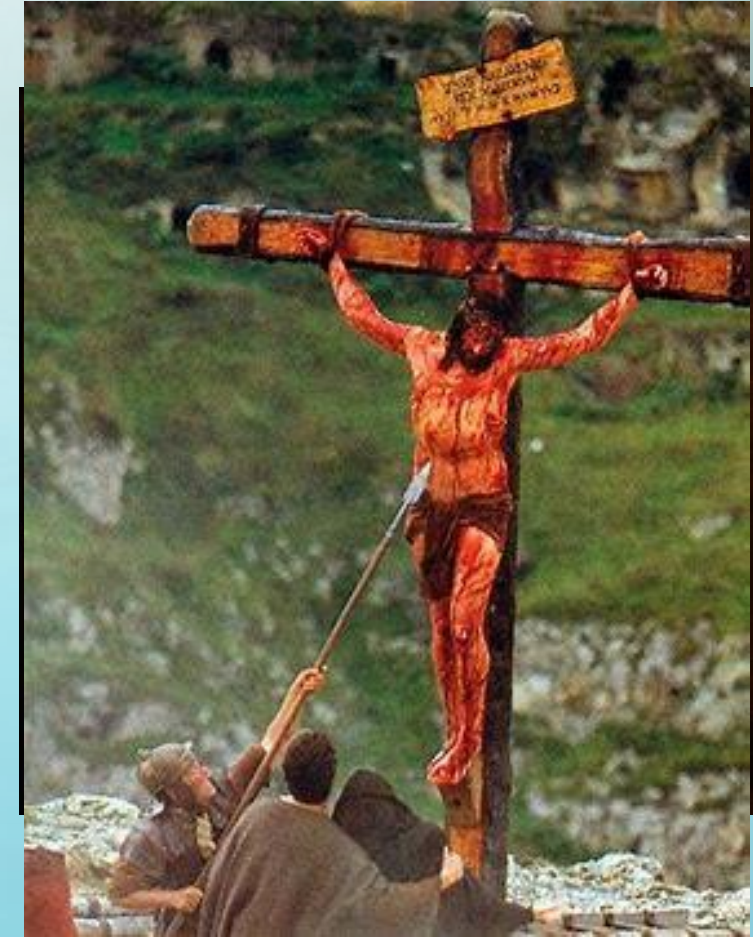


Relationship of Intimacy



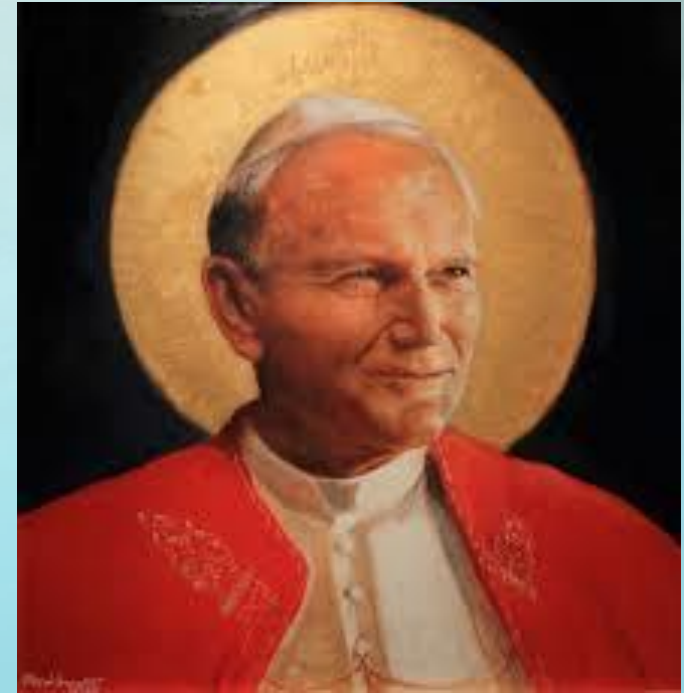
In Christ's crucifixion, he gave himself for us.

In Eucharist Christ gives himself for us.



Relationship of Intimacy

The spiritual journey “is a journey totally sustained by grace, nevertheless demands intense spiritual commitment and is no stranger to painful purifications. But it leads, in various possible ways, to an ineffable joy experienced by mystics as “nuptial union.” ~St. John Paul II



In the Sacramental Life of the Church:

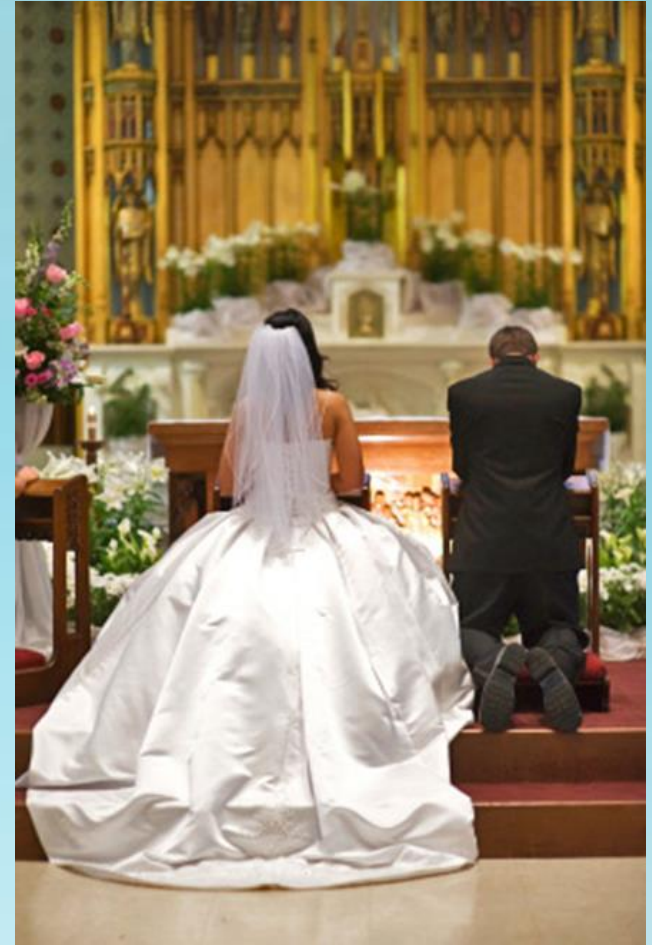
God invites us
into a deeper
union with
Him...

We are His
Beloved...



Mass is like a Wedding...

Our marriage to God!





Your Wedding...

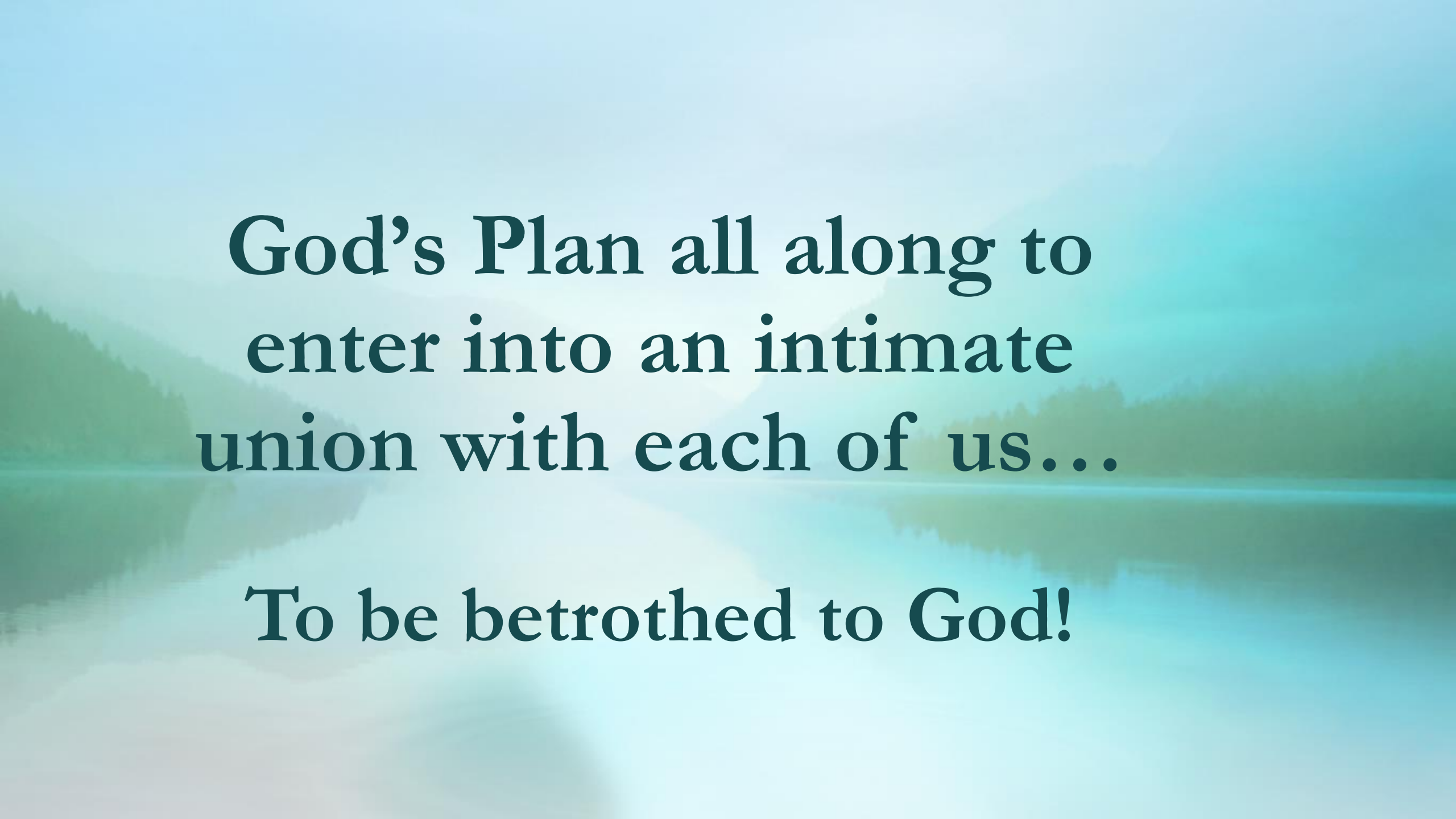


Wedding:

- Get cleaned up and dressed up
- Get a gift for the couple
- Arrive early
- Ask God to bless their marriage
- Celebrate with family and friends!

Mass:

- Get cleaned up and dressed up
- Arrive early
- Give the gift of yourself
- God gives the gift of Himself
- Ask God to bless your union with Him
- Celebrate with family and friends!



**God's Plan all along to
enter into an intimate
union with each of us...**

To be betrothed to God!