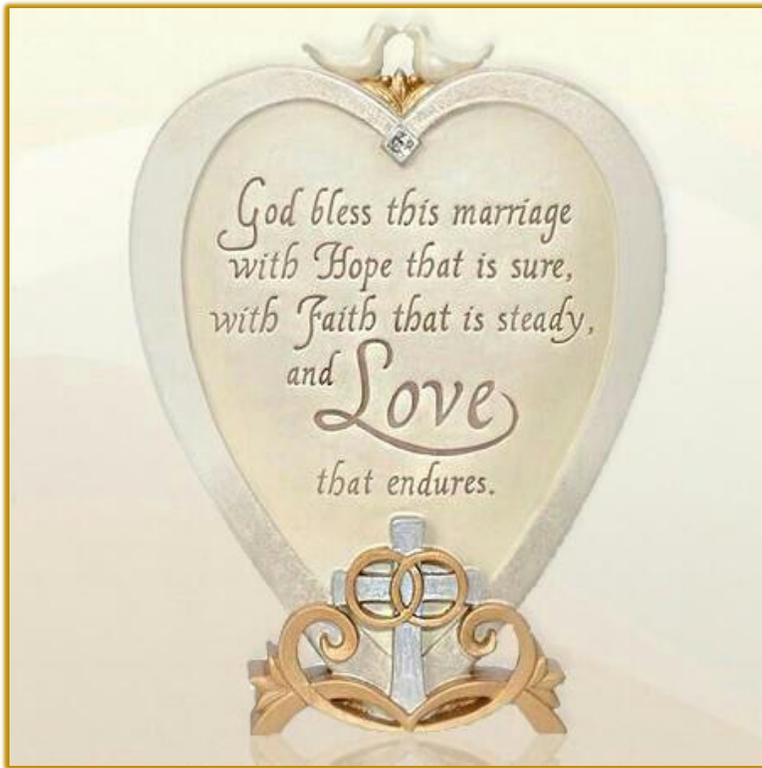


# HOW WE MET & BECAME A FAMILY

by Bev Hansen



As with many young people of that day, I struggled for many years with the decision of whether to pursue a religious vocation. Out of frustration, I had decided I should try the Holy Names Convent and enter in August 1959. In May of that year, I took my vacation to New York to visit a friend. She had to work one morning, so I spent the time shopping in several big-name department stores. Then I came upon St. Patrick's Cathedral. As I entered, I was overwhelmed with the beauty and the peace I felt there. Small altars lined both sides of the aisles and behind the main altar. I stopped and said a prayer at each altar asking God's

blessing and help in what I should do with my life. I did not pray that I would meet a man to become my husband or that I would enter the convent. I asked for a feeling of peace and certainty about the decision I would make.

Ken and I met on June 26, 1959, after I came home from vacation. It was a blind date, arranged by his cousin and my best friend, Mary Manion. It really was "love at first sight". We spent many hours talking...about our faith, values and what we wanted in a family. A week later, Ken asked me to marry him. I saw him one last time the following week-end; then, he left for overseas duty and came home seven months later for our Wedding. Each of us wrote letters to the other daily.

When Ken left, he said he would buy my rings aboard ship and send them to me. The last place in Portland we had been together was the Grotto of our Sorrowful Mother. It was decided that when I received the rings, I would go back to the Grotto on an already decided upon date and time...pray the Rosary...and at 8:00pm, kneel at the feet of Our Lady, and put the ring on my finger.

When the day came, I asked my Mother to go with me. We knelt at the beautiful outdoor chapel...prayed the Rosary together, knowing that Ken was at the same time saying his aboard ship. At 8:00pm, I walked up to the Altar, lit a candle, and asked God's Blessings on us. A friend was there practicing the organ for the following Sunday's Mass (she didn't know we were there). As I slipped the ring on my finger, she was playing the "Ave Maria". I felt such peace and knew my prayers had been answered.

Ken and I returned to the Grotto after our Wedding February 13, 1960, where we placed my wedding bouquet on the Altar. That was a most beautiful day—everything seemed so perfect. Like all young married couples, we saw nothing but rainbows. We had such dreams for our future—our home, our children and our life in general.

Never could we have dreamed on that most perfect day...that in our future we would be advised to terminate the pregnancy of our 7th child due to measles exposure...that we would be told another child was mentally handicapped...that we would receive a call from a son who had just had a bad trip on LSD...that a daughter would share with us that she is gay. Never in our wildest dreams could we have thought these things in our future, but on that most perfect day, we did pray for strength, courage, and guidance as we started on this new adventure.

Now, having celebrated 61 years of marriage, we know God has Blessed us...with the closeness of our 7 wonderful children, spouses, 7 beautiful grandchildren, extended family, wonderful friends, and a strength our Faith gives us. We are blessed with pretty good health and living on the beautiful Oregon coast. What more could we have asked for on that "most perfect day" in 1960?

