In their newest book, *Just Married: The Catholic Guide to Surviving and Thriving in the First Five Years of Marriage*, Dr. Greg and Lisa Popcak combine decades of experience as counselors, the latest findings in marriage research, twenty-three years of marriage, and the wisdom of Catholic teaching to offer couples the most up-to-date look at what it takes to create and sustain an incredible Catholic marriage that will last a lifetime.

Weaving their own story in throughout, the Popcaks give advice to help young couples once their honeymoon stage ends and the trials of married life begin. In the first five years of their marriage, the Popcaks experienced life-threatening illness, the loss of a baby, four job changes, two moves, two car accidents, and a business start-up, but they managed to get through by holding on to each other, their marriage, and God. Twenty-three years later, they invite readers to look to their relationship for inspiration: though they were young, poor, and under a lot of pressure, “We are a living illustration of the piles of research that say none of these things matter when it comes to marital satisfaction and longevity.”

The Popcaks tell couples that the journey to becoming “marriage masters” begins with willingness to make four commitments to:

- Personal and couple prayer.
- Nurture your love.
- Each other, but an even stronger commitment to your vows.
- Learn new skills when new challenges come instead of blaming your marriage or spouse for being “broken.”

The Popcaks encourage couples to open up to God and ask him how to love each other. It’s important to “restart your loving actions,” the Popcaks say, and an active and constant prayer life—leaning on God—is the most reliable way to do it. The Popcaks compare marital love to a fire, reminding couples they must work to keep their marriages going—they won’t sustain themselves. Research shows that making a commitment to their marriage, as well as to each other, gives a couple a better chance at a happy, long-lasting marriage. And the Popcaks reveal to couples that no marriage is “broken”; they just don’t have the skills to nurture it quite yet. If you learn those skills, they say, your marriage will weather life’s storms.

“I share a deep affinity with the Popcaks and the way they present the Faith. Their latest book, *Just Married*, is loaded with their typical winsome wisdom and advice. They help newly married couples unpack the great mystery of marriage and discover the divine love story that is behind their own. Every married couple—newly married or otherwise—will benefit from this book.”

Christopher West
Author of *Fill These Hearts*
Gregory K. Popcak is executive director of Pastoral Solutions Institute and the author of more than a dozen popular books integrating Catholic theology and counseling psychology. He is an expert on the practical applications of the theology of the body. Popcak’s books include *For Better . . . Forever!, Holy Sex!,* and *Parenting with Grace.* Popcak is a regular contributor to *Catholic Digest, Family Foundations,* and others. He serves as an adjunct professor for the sociology and graduate theology departments at the Franciscan University of Steubenville. He also serves as adjunct faculty for the Harold Abel School of Social and Behavioral Science at Capella University.

Lisa Popcak is the vice president of the Pastoral Solutions Institute. A family life coach, lactation consultant, and professional educator, she is the coauthor of *For Better . . . Forever!, Holy Sex!,* and *Parenting with Grace.* Popcak’s articles can be read in many popular Catholic magazines. A sought-after speaker on marriage, parenting, and women’s spirituality, she has addressed audiences across North America as well as in Australia and Hong Kong.

Since 2001, the Popcaks have hosted several nationally syndicated radio advice programs, including *Heart, Mind and Strength, Fully Alive!,* and, most recently, *More2Life.* They have also hosted two television series for EWTN: *For Better . . . FOREVER* and *God Help Me!*

From *Just Married:*

- Couples who pray together and have shared, meaningful spiritual commitments
- Couples who are committed to their vows more than their feelings for each other
- Couples who are committed to looking for little ways to make each other’s lives easier even when they’re scared, sick, stressed, or tired
- Couples who aren’t too proud to learn to adapt and learn new skills when they hit tough times, instead of blaming each other or their marriage,

last longer and are happier than couples who don’t.
Praise for Just Married:

“Just Married should be required reading for every recently married Catholic couple. Christian marriage is a call to heroic love. It should not be surprising that living this vocation well does not happen without prayer and effort. Greg and Lisa provide many helpful insights into the challenges that young couples encounter as well as practical strategies on how to overcome what otherwise will become obstacles to their happiness. Married couples honor and praise God most beautifully by striving daily to grow in their love for each other in the Lord. There is nothing more important that a couple can do to build up the Church and make a better world than to do whatever it takes to make their marriage strong and healthy. The Popcaks provide a practical pathway to help couples enjoy the abundant life God desires for them in this world and to help each other make it together to heaven.”

Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann
Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas

“Thank you, Greg and Lisa! Just Married is a treasure for today’s newly (and not so newly!) married couples. A guide this rich with grace and wisdom can only come from a deeply faith-ful Catholic married couple seasoned through years of marriage, professional practice, and prayer. This is theology of the body for the newly married couple.”

Damon Owens
Executive Director
Theology of the Body Institute

“We are so happy to be able to give the young people in our lives a copy of Just Married. This is a book filled with personal testimony, evidence from science, years of counseling experience, and, most importantly, a hopeful vision of marriage rooted in faith and nourished by prayer.”

Tim and Sue Muldoon
Author of Six Sacred Rules for Families

Suggested Interview Questions:

1. What are the most common mistakes newer couples make, and how do you recommend they avoid or resolve them?

2. You say that all couples have what it takes to have a successful Catholic marriage, as long as they are willing to learn new skills. What is one of these skills, and how will learning it help lead couples toward a stronger, longer-lasting marriage?

3. What advice would you give to newer couples who are worried they’ve made a huge mistake?

4. What can older couples learn from Just Married?

5. What is one surprisingly small thing you do to nurture your marriage that really helps?