



National Marriage Week USA
MARRIAGE IS WORTH IT! • EVERY FEB 7-14

to have, to hold, to honor

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FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

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Preaching Resource: World Marriage Sunday 2021

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 14, 2021

Below are a few suggested themes, reflective questions, and resources for preaching on World Marriage Sunday 2021. For more instruction or inspiration, visit foryourmarriage.org or marriageuniqueforareason.org.

First Reading: Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 32:1-2, 5, 11

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:31-11: 1

Alleluia: Luke 7:16

Gospel: Mark 1:40-45

❖ The Word of God

- The readings for the Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time highlight our need for Jesus as the Divine Physician. The Old Testament reading from Leviticus lays out the law for those who have contracted leprosy: such persons would be declared unclean, turned out from society, and made to live apart from others in efforts not to spread the disease. If a person were to touch a leper, they would then be declared unclean as well, facing the same restrictions.
- Jesus, “moved with pity...stretched out his hand, *touched him*, and said to him, ‘I do will it. Be made clean.’” The act of Jesus actually touching a leper would have shocked those around him. Love reaches out and touches others. Jesus touches this man, regardless of the risk of being ostracized himself. True love does not count the cost. Jesus gives all for all, unreservedly because his love knows no limits.
- Every marriage is meant to be a little icon of the love of Christ and his bride, the Church. The love shared between a man and a woman in holy matrimony points us to the self-emptying, self-sacrificing love God has for each one of us.

- The promises that married couples make to each other illustrate what this love looks like lived out in the day to day experience: to have and to hold, exclusively, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, to cherish, to honor until death. A person gives everything to his or her spouse.
- The continuation of living life amid a global pandemic may have some married couples reflecting that this has been a season of “for worse,” “for poorer,” and “in sickness.” There are many married couples who are suffering right now: marital strain, illness, unemployment, etc. Christ sees your struggle. He loves you through your struggle. He promised us that we would suffer in being his followers, but he also promised us that he would be with us always, “until the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).
- The sacrament of marriage provides the grace necessary to weather the storms of marriage and family life. We can draw upon those graces of marriage to assist us. Just as the leper cried out to Jesus and begged him for his healing touch, so too, must we be unafraid to reach out to God and ask him for the grace to help us in living out our vocations.
- Likewise, we are called to bring the healing touch of Christ to others. As members of the Body of Christ we are his hands and feet. How can you support those around you? Is God calling you and your spouse to reach out to a younger married couple in friendship? Is a new mom that you know feeling overwhelmed, is a family who is unable to go out because they are caretakers of an elderly family member feeling isolated? How can you reach out to them? How can you bring the healing touch of Christ into the lives of others?

❖ Connecting to National Marriage Week

- *Marriage and family concerns everyone:* Each of us comes from a family. Each of us is a son or a daughter. In God’s plan every child is meant to be the fruit of his or her mother’s and father’s love for each other in the sacred bond of marriage. Therefore, conversations about marriage and the family in the public square concern all of us, and therefore the Church’s teaching on marriage and family is important for all of us.
- *Acknowledging the experience and pain of broken marriages and families:* Sadly, many of us have experienced or know family or friends who have experienced the pain of a broken marriage and family. Each experience is unique, and the Lord’s mercy is great. Regardless of our individual circumstances, we all have a role to play in God’s vision of the family. Ultimately, through baptism, all of us are part of the perfect family – God’s family – as beloved sons and daughters of God the Father.
- *To Have, To Hold, To Honor:* The theme for this year’s celebration of National Marriage Week recalls the promises that spouses made to each other on their wedding day. This exchange of consent “is the indispensable element that ‘makes the marriage’” (CCC 1626). Couples are invited to meditate on how they live out their marriage promises in their daily lives. National Marriage Week is an opportunity for married couples to reflect on how they have grown together since their wedding day and to ponder how they can continue to grow in loving and honoring their spouse.

❖ Concluding Points

On this World Marriage Day, we thank our heavenly Father for the gift and blessing of marriage and the family. As we strive to live our particular vocations and respond to the Lord's grace in our lives, let's also consider how we might dedicate renewed prayer and attention to marriage and the family. As a start, here are possible areas we might consider:

- First, we begin with prayer: Let's remember to pray with and for marriages and families throughout our nation: for marriages in crisis, for families struggling with unemployment, for broken or wounded family relationships.
- Second, let us reclaim Sunday as the Lord's Day, a day of rest when we can focus on being together as a family. The celebration of Holy Mass together is the first essential way to honor this day. But is there something more the Lord is inviting us to when we go back home? Set aside some time to pray a decade of the rosary, enjoy the outdoors together, play ball, eat dinner together, have a game night!
- And third, let us remember that the Church is the family of God and a family of families. As a family, how can we share Christ with other married couples and families? Do we have any friends and family members who are struggling in their marriage, alone during this time of isolation, or particularly afflicted by this pandemic? When was the last time we checked on our elderly neighbors? Is there someone in the parish that we haven't seen in a while? How can we – as a family – reach out to those who are in need?

❖ Selected Resources

- On the exchange of consent – *For Your Marriage* articles: [The Exchange of Consent](#), [Making “I do” Work](#), [Till Death Do Us Part](#).
- On marriages in crisis – *For Your Marriage* [list of ministries](#) that help married couples in difficulty or crisis, *For Your Marriage*.
- On healthy sexuality within marriage – Paul VI, Encyclical Letter [Humanae Vitae](#), 1968.
- On divorce – USCCB, [Divorce and the Church's Healing Ministry](#), 2010.
- On lust and pornography – USCCB: [Create in Me a Clean Heart: A Pastoral Response to Pornography](#), 2015 and *Clean Heart* [series of pamphlets](#), 2016, *For Your Marriage* [Help for Men and Women Struggling with Pornography](#)
- Pope Francis's [Catechesis on the Family](#), January 7, 2015 – November 18, 2015.
- USCCB, Pastoral Letter [Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan](#), 2009.
- USCCB, *For Your Marriage* website: foryourmarriage.org.
- USCCB, *Por Tu Matrimonio* website: portumatrimonio.org.
- USCCB, *Marriage Unique for A Reason* website: marriageuniqueforareason.org.