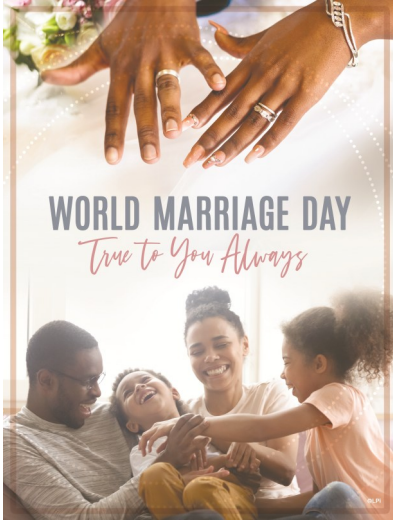


## FROM FR. JASON



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today we celebrate World Marriage Day. It is an opportunity to focus on building a culture of life and love that begins with supporting and promoting marriage and the family. Marriage is a gift from God – a profound representation of Christ's relationship with the Church. Through marriage, Christ seeks to not only draw the husband and wife closer to each other, but also to Himself, helping them grow in love and selflessness.

Congratulations to all our Sacramentally Married couples. To those who are in love or those who are just married civilly and will celebrate their Valentine's Day and are planning to get married, remember to start at the altar! Nobody else can help you as He will. Yes, even those who built on rock will go through trials, but with the best companion, Jesus Christ. Invest well and invest in the best. Somebody once said Jesus is our best Valentine. Yes, He never fails, and He will never fail to love us, and

He is always faithful and forgiving. What a great spouse we all have.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church says this about marriage: Marriage helps to overcome self-absorption, egoism, pursuit of one's own pleasure, and to open oneself to the other, to mutual aid and to self-giving. (CCC, #1609)

In the Latin Church, it is ordinarily understood that the spouses, as ministers of Christ's grace, mutually confer upon each other the sacrament of Matrimony by expressing their consent before the Church. In the Eastern liturgies the minister of this sacrament (which is called "Crowning") is the priest or bishop who, after receiving the mutual consent of the spouses, successively crowns the bridegroom and the bride as a sign of the marriage covenant. (CCC, #1623)

Reflect on these prayers for marriage, love, and the family – whether you wish to lift up those in your community or your own marriage to God.

Prayer for a Married Couple: O God, who in creating the human race willed that man and wife should be one, keep, we pray, in a bond of inseparable love those who are united in the covenant of Marriage, so that, as you make their love fruitful, they may become, by your grace, witnesses to charity itself. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Prayer in Defense of Marriage: God our Father, we give you thanks for the gift of marriage: the bond of life and love, and the font of the family. The love of husband and wife enriches your Church with children, fills the world with a multitude of spiritual fruitfulness and service, and is the sign of the love of your Son, Jesus Christ, for his Church. The grace of Jesus flowed forth at Cana at the request of the Blessed Mother. May your Son, through the intercession of Mary, pour out upon us a new measure of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit as we join with all people of good will to promote and protect the unique beauty of marriage. May your Holy Spirit enlighten our society to treasure the heroic love of husband and wife, and guide our leaders to sustain and protect the singular place of mothers and fathers in the lives of their children. Father, we ask that our prayers be joined to those of the Virgin Mary, that your Word may transform our service so as to safeguard the incomparable splendor of marriage. We ask all these things through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Switching gears, congratulations to our 2nd Grade Faith Formation class as they celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time this weekend! Please continue to pray for them as they begin to prepare for First Holy Communion.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Fr. Jason'.