

**World Marriage Day**  
**Second Sunday in February**  
**Sponsored by Worldwide Marriage Encounter**



**Clergy/Family Life Package**

**Package Table of Contents:**

- Statement of Purpose
  - History - Symbol - Theme - Prayer
- Liturgical Helps for Celebrating the Eucharist.
  - Options to Incorporate World Marriage Day into the Sunday Liturgy.
  - General Intercessions.
  - Solemn Blessing at End of Mass
- Holy Hour Prayer Service for World Marriage Day with suggestions for Music.
- Special Blessing for Married Couples.

**Statement of Purpose**

World Marriage Day honors husband and wife as head of the family, the basic unit of society. It salutes the beauty of their faithfulness, sacrifice and joy in daily, married life.

**History:** The idea of celebrating marriage began in Baton Rouge, La., in 1981, when couples encouraged the mayor, the governor and the Bishop to proclaim St. Valentines Day as "We Believe in Marriage Day". The event was so successful that the idea was presented to and adopted by Worldwide Marriage Encounter's National Leadership. By 1982, 43 Governors officially proclaimed the day and celebrations spread to U.S. military bases in several foreign countries. In 1983, the name was changed to "World Marriage Day", designated to be celebrated each year on the second Sunday in February. WMD celebrations continue to grow and spread to more countries and faith expressions every year.

**Symbol:** Our World Marriage Day Symbol speaks of the role and values we proclaim. Husband and wife are symbolically seen as two candle-like figures, reminding us that married love calls us to help enlighten the world. The couple is joined by a heart, focusing on love as the power that fosters unity within the couple and generates the capacity to be life-giving and inspire others to fruitfulness and unity.

**Theme:** The Theme for WMD has been permanently adopted as "Love One Another". This phrase is the commandment given us by Jesus in John 15:12. It speaks to us in a simple but challenging way of how our Heavenly Father wishes us to live. Loving one another is a daily decision - simple, but challenging.

**Prayer:** *"Father, as we prepare for WMD, we thank you for your tremendous gift of the Sacrament of Marriage. Help us to witness to its glory by a life of growing intimacy. Teach us the beauty of forgiveness so we may become more and more One in Heart, Mind and Body. Strengthen our communication and help us become living signs of your love. Make us grow more in love with the church so we may renew the Body of Christ. Make us a sign of unity in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Brother. Amen" - Fr. Bill Dilgen, S.M.M.*

# LITURGY HELPS FOR CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHANIST ON WORLD MARRIAGE DAY

## OPTIONS TO INCORPORATION WMD INTO SUNDAY LITURGY

While each parish or congregation may customize the fine points, many have developed a basic event that includes some of the following components:

### **Preliminary Preparations:**

1. A special service on WMD that has been promoted to all married couples through pulpit announcements and bulletin ads. Advertise to get all couples and families to attend this special event. Promote attendance by recognizing couples celebrating milestones in their marriages.
2. Reception-style party or picnic following the Mass/service, inviting all to attend.
3. Have married couples of each parish bring in a wedding picture the week preceding World Marriage Day ( WMD ) and display them on the weekend of the celebration of Marriage
4. A banner of the World Marriage Day Logo prominently displayed.

### **Liturgy:**

1. Homily related to the sacrament of marriage.
2. General intercessions related to marriage and families.
3. A special blessing of married couples.
4. A unity candle lit and displayed during the mass.
5. Couple married longest in attendance be the couple presenting the gifts.
6. A special couple's choir to sing songs pertaining to love, marriage and family

### **Setting/Decorations:**

1. Special floral arrangements for the church that might portray a wedding-like atmosphere.
2. Special decorations or displays in the main entrance or lobby of church.
3. Reserved seating for couples celebrating 25, 30, 40, 50, and 60 years of marriage. A procession of couples as part of the gathering rite.
4. Download the "Prayer for our Marriage", print it on Photo paper or card stock and hand out to married couples.

## SAMPLE GENERAL INTERCESSIONS (Husband and Wife to deliver)

### OPTION 1

**Celebrant:** Let us join in prayer for our special anniversary couples and for all married couples on this World Marriage Day, knowing that God hears us whenever we pray.

**Response: Lord, make us one.**

**Husband:** That all husbands may have the wisdom and courage to help their wives grow and develop their talents, to become all God wants them to be. We pray to the Lord.

**Wife:** That all wives among us have the knowledge and the will to encourage their husbands to grow and fulfill all the rich potential that lies within them. We pray to the Lord.

**Husband:** That we may receive the gifts of patience, imagination and understanding in our relationship with our children in these changing times. We pray to the Lord.

**Wife:** That all couples may be delivered from the dangers of boredom and routine which can erode the deepest love relationship. We pray to the Lord.

**Husband:** For the courage to overcome fear and reveal ourselves more openly and honestly through more intimate communication. We pray to the Lord.

**Wife:** That all our relatives, friends and neighbors may experience the joy of family love. We pray to the Lord.

**Husband:** That all the families on earth may have the resources they need to lead happy, healthy and prayer-filled lives. We pray to the Lord.

**Celebrant:** Father, you love us so much that you gave us your only Son. Grant that all who are in the union of marriage may reflect the beauty of your love and share it with others. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## SAMPLE GENERAL INTERCESSIONS (Husband and Wife to deliver)

### OPTION 2

From the Book of Blessing, The Roman Ritual New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co.

**Celebrant:** (#100 in Book of Blessing)

In the tender plan of His providence, God our almighty Father has given married love, its faithfulness (and its fruitfulness), a special significance in the history of salvation. Let us therefore call upon Him saying: Lord hear our prayer.

**Husband:** For our Holy Father, our bishops and all priests and religious, that they may be faithful in their call to fidelity and service. Let us pray to the Lord.

**Wife:** For all married couples, that God give them comfort and strength in each other and joy in their children. Let us pray to the Lord.

**Husband:** For all those preparing for marriage, that God guide them to a deep appreciation of this Sacrament. Let us pray to the Lord.

**Wife:** For widows and widowers, that God may comfort them with compassion. Let us pray to the Lord.

**Husband:** For those who suffer the pain of a troubled marriage, separation or divorce, that God guide them into a future filled with hope. Let us pray to the Lord.

**Wife:** For a greater respect for the dignity of marriage and family in our nation and society. Let us pray to the Lord.

**Husband:** For all our deceased family members and those of our parish who have died in faith. Let us pray to the Lord.

**Celebrant:** (#111 in Book of Blessing)

(With hands outstretched, the celebrant concludes the intercessions by saying :)

Almighty and eternal God, you have so exalted the unbreakable bond of marriage that it has become the sacramental sign of your Son's union with the Church as His spouse. Look with favor on these married couples, whom you have united in marriage, as they ask for your help and the protection of the Virgin Mary. They pray that in good times and in bad they will grow in love for each other; that they will resolve to be of one heart in the bond of peace. Lord, in their struggles let them rejoice that you are near to help them; in their needs let them know that you are there to rescue them; in their joys let them see that you are the source and completion of every happiness. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

AMEN

### Solemn Blessing at End of Mass

**Celebrant:** "Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing."

"May God the almighty Father, give you joy. (Response) Amen"

"May the only Son of God have mercy on you and help you in good times and in bad. (Response) Amen"

"May the Holy Spirit always fill your hearts with love. (Response) Amen"

"And may almighty God bless you all, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. (Response) Amen"

## **HOLY HOUR PRAYER SERVICE FOR WORLD MARRIAGE DAY**

Opening Hymn:

During Hymn, the Blessed Sacrament is exposed.

Incensing of the Blessed Sacrament.

Opening Prayer:

Leader: Lord our God, in this great sacrament we come into the presence of Jesus Christ your Son, born of the Virgin Mary and crucified for our salvation. May we who declare our faith in this fountain of love and mercy drink from it the water of everlasting life. We ask this through Christ our Lord. (taken from "Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass" page 137)

First Scripture Reading:

Leader: Tobit 7:11, beginning at "Raquel said to him" and to the end of verse 12.

Silent Reflection: "From now on you are her love and she is your beloved"

Lord Jesus, how is it that you brought us together?

Second Scripture Reading:

Leader: Tobit 8:4-8

Silent Reflection: "My love, get up; let us pray"

"You made Adam and you gave him his wife Eve to be his help and support."

Lord Jesus, lead me to be a greater help and support to my spouse.

Hymn:

Third Scripture Reading:

Leader: Ephesians 5:21-33

Silent Reflection: "Be subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ."

"Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her."

"This is a mystery but I speak in reference to Christ and the church."

Lord Jesus, how am I to be "subordinate"?

Lord Jesus, I need your help to "hand myself over" for my spouse.

Fourth Scripture Reading:

Leader: John 2:1-11

Silent Reflection: "Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding."

"Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee."

Lord, help me to recognize your presence in my marriage.

Lord, what favors you have done for my spouse and myself!

Hymn:

Fifth Scripture Reading:

Leader: John 13:34-35

Silent reflection: "I give you a new commandment, love one another."

Lord, I need you to teach me how to love.

Prayers:

Leader: (From the Book of Blessings, #97, #100, #101, and #103)

Hymn:

Incensing of the Blessed Sacrament

Concluding Prayer

Benediction with the Blessed Sacrament

Reposition of Blessed Sacrament

Divine Praises

Closing Hymn

## **Music Suggestions** **Holy Hour of Prayer World Marriage Day**

### **Opening Hymn**

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee (tune: ODE TO JOY)

Lift Up Your Hearts (Roc O'Connor, SJ) (OCP / New Dawn)

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (tune: HYFRYDOL)

We Have Been Told (David Haas) (GIA)

### **Second Hymn** (following *Second Scripture Reading and Silent Reflection*)

*any musical setting of Psalm 103 or Psalm 128 (A Cantor will therefore be needed.)*

Come and Journey With Me (David Haas) (GIA)

Companions On the Journey (Carey Landry) (OCP / New Dawn)

Covenant Hymn (Rory Cooney) (GIA)

Love Is the Sunlight (text: Borghild Jacobson (GIA) / tune: BUNESSAN – "Morning Has Broken")

### **Third Hymn** (following *Fourth Scripture Reading and Silent Reflection*)

*The following specifically mention the Wedding at Cana:*

God, In the Planning (also known as, "Bridegroom and Bride")

(text: John L. Bell, Iona Community (GIA) / tune: SLANE (trad. Irish tune)

God, Who Created Hearts to Love

(text: M.D. Ridge (OCP / New Dawn) / tune: LASST UNS ERFREUEN)

O Father, All-Creating (tune: AURELIA) (ICEL Resource Collection / Worship, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)

*These are also recommended:*

For the Beauty of the Earth (tune: DIX)

Hear Us Now, Our God and Father (tune: HYFRYDOL or ODE TO JOY)

The Servant Song (Will You Let Me Be Your Servant?) (Richard Gillard)

## **Hymn** (following the Prayers)

*If yet another theme-centered hymn is desired, (i.e. “love”, “marriage”, etc.) please refer to the songs listed above. Otherwise, the traditional hymns for Benediction are now sung to accompany the incensing of the Blessed Sacrament. (“O Salutaris” and “Tantum Ergo”)*

**Pastoral Note:** *If another theme-centered hymn is used prior to Benediction, planners should be aware that this will mean the assembly will be singing three songs in a row. A decision will need to be made as to whether this is desirable given their particular situation.*

## **Closing Hymn**

*The Closing Hymn may be from one of the categories listed below.*

### **General Hymns of Praise and Thanksgiving**

All Creatures of Our God and King (tune: LASST UNS ERFREUEN)

Canticle of the Sun (Marty Haugen) (GIA)

Glory and Praise to Our God (Dan Schutte) (OCP / New Dawn)

Holy God, We Praise Thy Name (tune: GROSSER GOTT)

### **Mission-Oriented / Sending Forth**

**(Giving expression to the ways Christian Married Love can have an effect in our world)**

Lead Me, Lord (John Becker) (OCP / New Dawn)

Lord, Whose Love In Humble Service (tune: BEECH SPRING or IN BABILONE)

Send Down the Fire (Marty Haugen) (GIA)

The Love of Christ Urges Us On (Jeffrey Honore) (World Library Publications)

We Are Called (David Haas) (GIA)

## **A SAMPLE OF A BLESSING FOR MARRIED COUPLES**

The Priest invites the remainder of the congregation to pray in silence as he prays a blessing for married couples.

**PRIEST:** As we remember today the celebration at which you joined your lives in an unbreakable bond through the Sacrament of Matrimony, you now intend to renew before the Lord the promises you made to one another. Turn to the Lord in prayer that this bond will be strengthened by Divine Grace.

**HUSBAND:** Blessed are you, Lord, for in your goodness I took \_\_\_\_\_ as my wife.

**WIFE:** Blessed are you Lord, for by your goodness I took \_\_\_\_\_ as my husband.

**BOTH:** Blessed are you, Lord for in the good and bad times of our life, you have stood lovingly by our side. Help us, we pray, to remain faithful in our love for one another and that we may be true witnesses of the covenant you have made with humankind.

**PRIEST:** May the Lord keep you safe all the days of your life. May He be your comfort in adversity and your support in prosperity. May he fill your home with blessings through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**PRIEST:** (Blessings of the rings if appropriate) Increase and sanctify, Lord, the love of your servants who once gave each other a ring, as a sign of faithfulness, may they always grow in the grace of their sacrament, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**PRIEST:** Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing:

**PRIEST:** May God the Almighty Father give you joy.

**RESPONSE:** Amen

**PRIEST:** May the only Son of God have mercy on you and help you in good times and in bad.

**RESPONSE:** Amen.

**PRIEST:** May the Holy Spirit always fill your hearts with love.

**RESPONSE:** Amen

**PRIEST:** And May Almighty God bless you all, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**RESPONSE:** Amen