

Radiate Love: Celebrating Marriage and Family



In the depths of our hearts, we all want to be seen and known, to love and be loved. Marriage is a radiant gift from God that fulfills this profound desire. While not everyone is called to marriage, this Vocation is an integral and meaningful way for us to fulfill the deepest longing of our hearts. That is why we celebrate World Marriage Day today.

As humans, we use rituals to express meaning that mere words cannot adequately capture. We hold baby showers and graduations, funerals, and burials, to mark time and rites of passage. Likewise, the exchange of vows and rings at a wedding expresses a deep commitment and lifelong promise. Through them, we profess, “I freely give my whole self to you, without holding anything back. I promise to be faithful. And I receive all of you, flaws and all.” It’s romantic. It’s authentic. It’s an adventure that will certainly come with challenges but provides to spouses the intimate security that flows from lifelong trust and commitment.

In God’s amazing design of marriage, He has also taken into account our health and well-being. Married people of every background are happier, healthier, and more fulfilled than their unmarried counterparts, and their children tend to do better socially, emotionally, and academically than the kids of unmarried parents.¹ Marriage is truly *good* for spouses, families, and society as a whole!

Make no mistake, marriage can be daunting at times. It can be challenging to find a suitable life partner. Relational, economic, and cultural pressures affect single and married people, and many of us carry wounds from broken relationships, divorce, or traumatic experiences. But when a marriage is able to stand the test of time, it is beautiful, transformative, and ultimately helps us to become the best version of ourselves. This is why we call it a Vocation—it is a high calling and a path of holiness that makes us more fully human.

Jesus chose to launch his public ministry while celebrating the marriage of his friends at the Wedding Feast at Cana. This was no accident. Jesus wanted to show us how important the Vocation of marriage is to God. In the year ahead, the Catholic Church in CA will seek to illuminate and proclaim the goodness of marriage and family. We will demonstrate to the world, by word and witness, why the Vocation of marriage is unique and beautiful. May Almighty God continue to invite people to the Sacrament of Marriage so that they may radiate the love of God to a world that stands in great need of such witness.



Saint Thomas More, Martyr for the Sacrament of Marriage

Born in London in 1478 as the son of a judge, St. Thomas More became a lawyer and prominent public servant himself and was known for his brilliance and moral honesty. He and his wife Jane had four children together. After Jane died of a sudden illness, he quickly married Alice, a widow, so his children would still have a mother. Their home was always open to others in need, especially children—he adopted Alice’s daughter and fostered two more daughters.

When King Henry VIII declared himself “Supreme Head of the Church,” St. Thomas refused to support the king’s divorce or acknowledge the children of King Henry and Anne Boleyn as heirs to the throne. For this he was accused of treason and sentenced to death by beheading in 1534. Thus, he became a martyr for the Sacrament of Marriage.

Reflection questions for couples:

How does the example of Saint Thomas More inspire us to grow in our commitment and love for one another?
How does his witness inform our calling to nurture the life of the next generation, whether they be our own children or those of others?

Reflection questions for parents and children:

Think of married couples we know. Who are good role models of marriage? What virtues do they show?
How does our family pray for and serve others? Are there ways our family can grow in service to those in need?

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