



www.radiatelove.info



Over the last two years, the National Eucharistic Revival has ushered the Catholic faithful into a greater faith and appreciation for the amazing sacramental gift of our Lord, who draws us to himself through our communion in his Body and Blood. As a practical way to incarnate the grace of the Revival into our families and communities, **the bishops of California are dedicating the 2024-2025 pastoral year to helping the Catholic faithful renew and deepen our lived experience of the Sacrament of Marriage** – which is modeled on the irrevocable covenantal love of God for his people expressed in the Eucharist.

Under the title “**Radiate Love**,” every Catholic community is invited to participate in this initiative, starting on World Marriage Day – February 11, 2024 – when couples all over the globe are called by God to invest in their relationships and let that love radiate out to the whole world, first and foremost in their own family. This soft launch of the initiative will be followed by monthly reflections, prayers, and other materials to help form the faith of Catholics of all ages, beginning in July, 2024.

The materials in this packet are designed for the soft launch, and there will be additional packets from the California Catholic Conference arriving quarterly as we progress through the pastoral year. As a leader in your diocese, we ask you to join with your colleagues to make these resources broadly available in every parish. Here you will find the following

World Marriage Day Parish Resources:

- **Radiate Love – A Prayer for Marriage**
- **Intercessions and a Blessing for World Marriage Day Masses**
- **Homily Helps for February 11, 2024**
- **Bulletin Insert for February 11, 2024**
- **Sample Flock Note or Email Message**
- **Sample Social Media Posts**



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Diocese of San Diego

Archbishop José H. Gomez
Archdiocese of Los Angeles

Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone
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Diocese of Fresno

Bishop Alberto Rojas
Diocese of San Bernardino

Bishop Jaime Soto
Diocese of Sacramento

Bishop Daniel E. Garcia
Diocese of Monterey

Bishop Oscar Cantú
Diocese of San Jose

Bishop Robert F. Vasa
Diocese of Santa Rosa



Celebrating Marriage and Family

World Marriage Day Parish Resources

Note: All of the following resources are available for download in English and Spanish in [Google Docs](#). Additional language versions of some materials will be added there in January, 2024.



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A PRAYER FOR MARRIAGE

Heavenly Father,

We praise you and thank you for your great gift of the Sacrament of Marriage.

Help all married couples witness to its beauty
through a life of love, joy, patience,
and generous self-giving.

Help families to exercise faithfulness and mercy,
to be one in heart, mind, and body,
accepting children lovingly as gifts from you.

When family life presents challenges
or is lacking in peace and understanding,
teach us the beauty of forgiveness
and bearing one another's burdens.

Strengthen our love so that it endures not only through
the triumphs but also through the heartbreaks of married life.
And bless our homes and our families so that others will see
your generosity and faithfulness guiding our lives.

Deepen our communion at home and with the Church,
so that we may radiate love as a living sign of everlasting hope.

We ask these blessings in the name of Jesus, our Lord.

Amen.





Intercessions and Blessing for World Marriage Day February 11, 2024

General Intercessions

For all married couples, may they always cling to one another through the joys and sorrows of life, and may they experience growth and healing to radiate the perfect love of God as the source, example, and final destiny of their mutual love.

For young adults, may the living models of healthy and real married couples and parents in our community inspire in them a lively hope for a committed, faithful, and lifelong love, rooted in the love of Christ.

After Communion

Optional: Invite a married couple to briefly share (suggest 3 minutes) after the Communion Rite how the Sacrament of Marriage has been a blessing for them through the ups and downs of life.

Blessing after Communion: After reciting the Prayer after Communion, invite all the married couples in the parish to stand and receive a blessing in the following or similar words:

Almighty and eternal God,
You blessed the union of married couples
so that they might radiate your love
and reflect the union of Christ with his Church:
look now with kindness on them.

Renew their marriage covenant,
increase your love in them,
and strengthen their bond of peace
so that, with their children,
they may always rejoice in the gift of
your blessing.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.





Sunday Readings and Homily Themes for World Marriage Day

If you are a priest or deacon in California, please sign up for our email updates at: www.radiatelove.info. Also be sure to sign up for the **Homiletics Webinar** about this celebration on **January 17 at 1:00pm**, where a \$500 prize will be awarded to one of the attendees. Don't miss it!

February 11, 2024 – Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time and World Marriage Day

(<https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/021124.cfm>)

First Reading: Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46 – those who suffer from leprosy are to dwell apart

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 32:1-2, 5, 11 – I turn to you, Lord, in time of trouble

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1 – Whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God... not seeking my own benefit but that of the many, that they may be saved.

Gospel: Mark 1:40-45 – Healing of the leper: “If you wish, you can make me clean.” Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, “I do will it. Be made clean.”

Note to Pastors and Homilists: This year, World Marriage Day serves as a “soft launch” for the *Radiate Love* initiative in Catholic dioceses, parishes, and schools throughout California. Starting in July 2024, one Sunday each month will break open a key theme related to marriage to help our Catholic people to understand, celebrate, nurture, and live this sacrament given to us by God for our holiness and eternal salvation. In parishes, this means there will be multiple resources available to enhance the formation in complementary ways: homily helps, prayers of the faithful, prayer cards, bulletin inserts, family activities, social media, videos from our bishops, and occasional parish activities (i.e. blessings, catechetical events, gifts for couples, etc.). Many of those types of tools are available to deploy in this parish resource packet.

As you prepare your homily for this weekend, the focus should be broadly on the celebration of World Marriage Day, and in particular on the *Radiate Love* initiative. You should feel free to utilize any and all of the materials as reference points (bulletin insert, prayer card, blessing, videos, etc.), as well as the core ideas and scriptural connections outlined below. Notably, the average number of Catholic weddings in California over the last three years (2020 to 2022) has declined by 33% from the 2012 level. You may also find the following research to be helpful regarding recent current cultural shifts concerning marriage: <https://thrivingcenterofpsych.com/blog/millennials-gen-z-marriage-expectations-statistics/>

Nevertheless, it is not necessary to address every concept. Use pastoral sensitivity to the needs of your community to weave the themes together in a way that will make the most sense for your people. Keep in mind that the soft launch is not the time to focus too much on negatives and challenges. The goal here is to provide a heartfelt and positive invitation to grow together in the journey ahead that will expound the Good News about the Sacrament of Matrimony for our families and for the world. In future months, there will be opportunities to explore the demands and beauty of Christian marriage, as well as how it is distinct—and better for us—than popular ideas about marriage in evolving social attitudes.

Theme: World Marriage Day - Radiate Love - Together We Thrive

- **Celebration of World Marriage Day**

Every year as St. Valentine's Day approaches, we take time to appreciate the great loves in our lives, whether they be friendships, romantic relationships, or our lifelong spouse—the one with whom we choose to build a family. And so naturally, the second Sunday of February is the day we celebrate World Marriage Day. The purpose of World Marriage Day is to emphasize the beauty of marriage and to honor husbands and wives for their faithfulness and sacrifices. By the first week of February, the CCC will post a short video from Archbishop Cordileone (San Francisco) on this aspect at www.radiatelove.info.

- **What does this have to do with today's readings about the healing of leprosy?**

In popular culture, St. Valentine's Day romanticizes marriage and the love of spouses, but the reality of married love is that it is not always smooth sailing. Nevertheless, as Catholics we celebrate the indissolubility of marriage—meaning that it is an exclusive, faithful, and lifelong relationship—because that commitment gives spouses a great freedom to be fully themselves with each other. It is a beautiful gift, given in faith, hope, and love, and it is good news for a world that is becoming more and more skeptical about the bonds of human love and family life. But it also requires a lifelong openness to change and to grow. Every married couple understands that we sometimes fall short of our commitments and ideals, and those are the moments when we most need the healing touch and guidance of Jesus Christ, just like the leper in today's Gospel. As Pope Francis has said, "God's indulgent love always accompanies our human journey; through grace, it heals and transforms hardened hearts, leading them back to the beginning through the way of the cross." (Amoris Laetitia, 62)



- **The Eucharist is the source of strength and renewal for married couples**

In this year of Eucharistic Revival, we often forget that our celebration at the Table of the Lord is also a foretaste of the Wedding Banquet that we will all share in Heaven. At that banquet, Jesus Christ is both the sacrificial Lamb of God and the Bridegroom, and in Baptism we have all put on our white bridal gown in the form of our baptismal garment, because as Church we are all together the Bride of Christ! It is that relationship, between Jesus and all of us who are baptized, that serves as the model and guide for every Christian marriage. (Eph 5:31-32) By the first week of February, the CCC will post a short video from Bishop Soto (Sacramento) on this aspect at www.radiatelove.info.

As spouses, we are renewed and restored in the love of Christ, just as the leper was. Also like the leper, we are called to let that healing love radiate into the world around us, to strengthen the hope of the young generation and restore the shine to the love of older couples. Perhaps you know some young couples who have taken the step to live together, but without the benefit of public commitment and sacramental grace. The Gospel of God's love in Jesus Christ invites the married couples in our community to joyfully give witness to the goodness and beauty of married life, drawing young couples to say "I want what they have." This is a challenging and worthy goal, but we all may fall short at times. A great way to respond would be for couples to come together before the Lord in the Eucharist and repeat the words of the leper: "Lord, if you wish, you can make us clean."

- **Radiate Love** – The witness of marriage is not just for the couple—it is for the world! Being made clean and restored in Christ is a real sacramental grace, but it is up to us to follow through and bring it to life through practices of loving kindness, forgiveness, and mercy. It may be difficult and even daunting at times, but it is always worth the effort—you are worth the effort, and so is your spouse! And the part that we often forget is that marriage is not just for the couple—it is also a grace for their children, and it is a sign of the Good News of Christ for the whole world. By the first week of February, the CCC will post a short video from Bishop Brennan (Fresno) on this aspect at www.radiatelove.info.



¹ John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, n. 17: "The family has the mission to become more and more what it is, that is to say, a community of life and love, in an effort that will find fulfillment, as will everything created and redeemed, in the Kingdom of God. Looking at it in such a way as to reach its very roots, we must say that the essence and role of the family are in the final analysis specified by love. Hence the family has the mission to guard, reveal and communicate love, and this is a living reflection of and a real sharing in God's love for humanity and the love of Christ the Lord for the Church His bride."

Countless studies have demonstrated beyond a shadow of doubt the enduring value and importance of marriage in forming responsible and healthy adults, well-behaved and successful children, and cohesive, lively communities. By their love, married couples and families give witness to the love of God. Today in particular, Catholic couples all over the world are called by God to invest in their relationships, and to let that love radiate to the whole world, starting with their children. The world nowadays is desperately seeking inspiring and healthy examples and models to follow. As Catholics, Pope Francis says that we are called to be “joyful messengers of challenging proposals, guardians of the goodness and beauty which shine forth in a life of fidelity to the Gospel.” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 168)

With that in mind, our California Bishops are united in their desire this year to equip us all to bear witness to the gift of the Sacrament of Matrimony—for couples, for their children, for our Church, and for the world. Please take home the prayer cards you will find in the pews (if applicable), and also take some time to read and discuss the bulletin insert. Above all, appreciate the loving married couples who have inspired you in your life, and if you are married, share with your spouse some practical ways that you can Radiate Love at home, at work, in the parish, and in the world.

Magisterial resources for reference:

- On marriage and family: *Gaudium et Spes* (nn. 47-52), *Familiaris Consortio* (nn. 11-15) and *Amoris Laetitia* (nn. 67-75)
- On responding to current cultural realities: *Familiaris Consortio* (nn. 4-10) and *Amoris Laetitia* (nn. 50-57)
- On the connection between Marriage and the Eucharist: *Sacramentum Caritatis* (nn, 27-29)
- On the pastoral care of married couples and families: *Called to the Joy of Love* (USCCB) and *Catechumenal Pathways for the Married Life* (Vatican)



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?

Scan to Learn More!



¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation, “Success Sequence: A Synthesis of the Literature” (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opa/reports/success-sequence-synthesis-literature>).



Saint Thomas More, Martyr for the Sacrament of Marriage

(for Flocknote or other similar parish communication on February 11, 2024)

Born in London in 1478 as the son of a prominent lawyer and judge, Saint Thomas More received a classical education and pursued higher studies in law. He would become a prominent public servant in his own right, renowned for his brilliance and moral honesty. He married Jane Colt of Essex in 1505, and they had four children together. When she died of a sudden illness in 1511, he quickly married a widow named Alice Middleton so that his children would not long suffer the lack of a loving mother. Their home was always open to others in need, especially children—they welcomed two girls as wards and raised them as their own.

When King Henry VIII declared himself “Supreme Head of the Church,” St. Thomas opposed the king’s designs, especially with regard to divorce. He refused to take an oath acknowledging the children of King Henry and Anne Boleyn as legitimate heirs to the throne, so 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 and his wives inspire or challenge us to grow in our commitment and love for one another?
- How does their witness inform our calling to nurture the life of the next generation, whether they be our own children or those of others?
- What more can we do to radiate love as a couple—at home, at church, and in the world?

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?
- *For older children:* How is marriage portrayed in the media? What messages does that send?





Social Media Tips and Ideas for Communications Directors **World Marriage Day – February 11, 2024**

As a major initiative of the California Bishops for 2024-2025, *Radiate Love* should find a prominent place in diocesan and parish social media, starting with the soft launch on World Marriage Day, February 11, 2024. You may feel free to use the *Radiate Love* logo from the California Catholic Conference as a way to tie the initiative together visually, but we want to encourage each diocese to make use of its own images and style or branding. Please consider the ideas on this page as starting points for your own creativity, and feel free to draw phrases and themes from any of the other materials in this packet or the lectionary readings of the day.

Social Media Post and Samples Messages

Join the bishops of California to *Radiate Love*: an initiative celebrating marriage and family throughout our state on this very special World Marriage Day. And watch for more throughout the year! #WorldMarriageDay #RadiateLove

Happy World Marriage Day! Join us in celebrating this beautiful journey of love. Let's embrace each day as an opportunity to strengthen our bonds, support one another, and spread love in our homes and beyond. Happy World Marriage Day! #WorldMarriageDay #RadiateLove

Join us in celebrating World Marriage Day! Today, we honor the beauty of the marriage. Together, we thrive in love, faith, and unity. Let's cherish the journey of marriage, a path where we grow, learn, and support each other. Here's to the joy, strength, and blessings that come from walking hand in hand. Happy World Marriage Day! #WorldMarriageDay #TogetherWeThrive #RadiateLove

Sample Messages for use with your own images:

- Marriage radiates the love of God!
- Celebrate World Marriage Day... Because Together We Thrive
- In the deepest core of our hearts, we want to love and be loved.
- Marriage: It's romantic. It's authentic. It's an adventure!
- Give witness to the truth that God is love and love is from God.
- We turn to you, Lord, in times of trouble. (Psalm 32)
- Whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. (1 Cor 10:31)
- Teach us the beauty of forgiveness and bearing one another's burdens.
- I freely give my whole self to you, without holding anything back.
- When a marriage is able to stand the test of time, it is beautiful, transformative... a path of holiness that makes us more fully human.
- How do you *Radiate Love* as a couple, and as a family?
- Love is forever because God is Love.

Downloadable Files



Prayer Card English | Spanish



Bulletin Insert English | Spanish

