



World Marriage Day – February 11, 2024
SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - A

(We invite all married couples to come forward and sit together in the front rows. All couples celebrating their silver or golden jubilees this year, please come and occupy the first rows.)

Introduction: Jesus communicates the love and mercy of God in signs that speak more eloquently than words. This is what we must learn from Jesus today.

We also celebrate World Marriage Day, to proclaim the value of Marriage, as permanent, faithful and fruitful bond, not just to spouses and children, but all families, the Church, and the whole world. Pope Francis says - Marriage is a “Call to the Joy of Love... And Joy of the Church.”

Readings:

1st Reading: [Leviticus 13: 1-2, 44-46](#) “He shall dwell apart, making his abode outside the camp.”

2nd Reading: [1 Corinthians 10: 31—11:1](#) “Avoid giving offense, Try to please”

Gospel: [Mark 1: 40-45](#) “A leper came to Jesus he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, 'I do will it. Be made clean”

Homily Hints:

In Jewish society, people affected by leprosy were ostracized because they were considered “ritually unclean.” They became “untouchables” according to Mosaic Law.

No Jewish rabbi at the time of Jesus would permit a person affected by leprosy to come near him for fear of defilement. Jesus also is a rabbi, but his approach is completely different. When he is approached by the sick with leprosy, Jesus stretches out his hand, touches him and heals him. Jesus is not worried about contamination or ritual defilement. For him, a diseased person is more important and recognizes his human dignity.

Touch is a deep way of communication. We allow only our loved ones to physically touch us and reciprocate loving gestures of touch. Married people should be comfortable with the touch of their spouse, and it should communicate love, intimacy and togetherness. Spouses should be able to communicate deeply through their bodies and experience God’s love and deep joy.

Some spouses have experienced physical abuse, and are wounded; this prevents them from experiencing joy, and they are anxious about touching and being touched. Spouses often shut each other out in a marriage relationship not allowing the other to touch them for fear of being wounded again. There are others who emotionally and physically neglect their spouses and/or are violent with them. Only the Lord can bring healing and wholeness.



In the second reading, St Paul writing to the Corinthians says, a married person is to be considerate to his/her spouse and not seek one's own good, but the good of the other. It is the spouses' caring and tender behaviour that can bring healing and wellness in marriage. It is the duty of each spouse to take care and heal one another to experience God's joyful grace and love.

On this World Marriage Day, as married spouses, you are invited to strive to better your relationship and make your families happy, healthy and holy. May the Holy Family of Nazareth become your model today and always, knowing that "the joy of the family is the joy of the Church" (Pope Francis)

(Recommended: to renew the Marriage Vows)

Prayers for the Faithful:

Celebrant: Loving and merciful father, on this World Marriage Day, shower your blessings upon us and guide and protect us, especially all married couples, their children, friends and relatives as we place before you, our petitions. Our response will be:

Response: Loving Father, listen to our prayer.

1. For the leaders of the Church, that God may continually purify their hearts, inspiring them to respond joyfully to God's call. Let us pray to the Lord.
2. For National and local leaders, that they may always remain united and promote peace and justice to their peoples. Let us pray to the Lord.
3. For married couples, that they may love each other beyond words through their actions to salute the beauty of their joys, sacrifice and togetherness in their daily married life. Let us pray to the Lord...
4. For couples, whose marriages are under threat. May they keep the lines of communication open to settle disputes, truly empathize and forgive each other to experience great joy. Let us pray to the Lord...
5. For all the prayers we hold in our hearts (pause). Let us pray to the Lord...

Celebrant: Father, in spite of our unworthiness, you call us to follow you. As you hear our prayers make us faithful to follow the vocation you have called us to live. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Couples' Thanksgiving Prayer: (After Post-Communion prayer)

Father, we thank you for binding us together, through your tremendous gift of the Sacrament of Marriage. Please remind us to share each day of the love you have implanted in our hearts for each other. We ask that you be the center and anchor of our marriage. Guide us and bless us. Help us to love beyond words with our actions, as you have loved us, with our gentleness, patience, passion and humility. Amen.

The Liturgy Notes have been prepared by Fr Cajetan D. Menezes who was the Director of the Family Apostolate in the Archdiocese of Bombay, Presently, he is the Parish Priest of St Anthony Church, Malwani, Mumbai and is also the Priest Coordinator for Support and Development for the Retrouvaille Ministry in Asia.