

RESOURCES FOR PREACHING
World Marriage Sunday (and First Sunday of Lent)
February 14, 2016

Deut 26:4-10

Ps 91:1-2, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15

Rom 10:8-13

Lk 4:1-13: The Temptation of Jesus

World Marriage Sunday occurs this year on the First Sunday of Lent within the Jubilee Year of Mercy. It is an opportunity to highlight the Jubilee year and the great gift of God's mercy which is meant to be at the heart of marriage and family life. The themes and resources below are suggestions for consideration.

Possible themes, with further resources

- Lent is a time of seeking God's mercy, especially in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation; special emphasis on mercy during the special Jubilee year
 - USCCB webpage: [Rediscovering the Sacrament of Penance](#) (includes bulletin insert, "How-To Guide to the Sacrament")
 - ["God's Gift of Forgiveness: A Pastoral Exhortation on the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation"](#): "By the grace of the Holy Spirit, we seek forgiveness and repentance, let go of patterns of sin, grow in the life of virtue, and witness to a joyful conversion."
- Mercy in the family: the importance of family members forgiving each other; everyone is part of a family and can give and receive mercy
 - Pope Francis, Wednesday Audience: ["Forgive Us Our Debts"](#) (11.4.15): "The capacity to forgive and to seek forgiveness is part of the vocation and mission of the family."
 - Pope Francis, [Address to Engaged Couples](#) (2.14.14): "Jesus, who knows us well, teaches us a secret: don't let a day end without asking forgiveness, without peace returning to our home, our family."
- The Lord hears the cry of His people and sees their affliction (Deut 26:7); He is with them in their distress (Ps 91:15). The Lord is near to all marriages and families in distress and longs to heal them. Do we trust in His mercy and in His desire to heal us? May we seek the Lord and His healing mercy this Lent, especially in the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation.
- Everything we have is a gift we receive from the Lord and should be offered back to Him, in a spirit of seeking His guidance and blessing (Deut 26:10). For husbands and wives, this includes marriage and children. All that we are and all that we have are the Lord's. What a great testimony for marriages and families to live the grace they have received and thereby to live in Jesus, who submitted everything to the Father and His will (Lk 4:1-13).

- The Holy Spirit – received at our Baptism and Confirmation – gives us the strength we need to withstand temptation (Lk 4:1-13); husbands and wives receive an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Marriage. A common temptation today is a lack of trust in the Lord’s mercy, in the power of His forgiveness. May we who are filled with the Holy Spirit – anointed and consecrated in Him – be led more deeply by Him to greater trust in the Lord’s mercy this Lent and Jubilee year.
- Confessing Jesus as Lord (Rom 10:9) can be difficult in our culture today; it may require sacrifice, for example, to confess Jesus’ teaching on marriage as the lifelong union of one man and one woman. In confessing the truth about marriage, may our witness ever strive to be a sign of the Lord Who is mercy and truth Himself.
 - USCCB website: [Marriage: Unique for a Reason](#) (videos, study guides, catechesis)
 - Pope Francis, [Address to Bishops of Puerto Rico](#) (6.8.15): “Allow me to call your attention to the value and beauty of marriage. ... The differences between man and woman are not for opposition or subordination, but for communion and generation, always in the ‘image and likeness’ of God.”

Other resources

- Pope Francis, Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy [Misericordiae Vultus](#) (4.11.15)
- Pope Francis, [Homily on the Feast of the Holy Family](#) (12.27.15)
 - “In the Year of Mercy, every Christian family can become a privileged place on this pilgrimage for experiencing *the joy of forgiveness*. Forgiveness is the essence of the love which can understand mistakes and mend them. How miserable we would be if God did not forgive us! Within the family we learn how to forgive, because we are certain that we are understood and supported, whatever the mistakes we make.”
 - “Let us not lose confidence in the family! It is beautiful when we can always open our hearts to one another, and hide nothing. Where there is love, there is also understanding and forgiveness. To all of you, dear families, I entrust this most important mission - the domestic pilgrimage of daily family life - which the world and the Church need, now more than ever.”
- USCCB, *For Your Marriage* website: www.foryourmarriage.org
- USCCB, *Por Tu Matrimonio* website: www.portumatrimonio.org