

**RESOURCES FOR PREACHING**  
**World Marriage Sunday**  
**Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**February 12, 2017**

Sir 15:15-20

Ps 119:1-2, 4-5, 17-18, 33-34

1 Cor 2:6-10

Mt 5: 17-37 or Mt 5:20-22a, 27-28, 33-34a, 37

*World Marriage Sunday this year offers the opportunity to reflect on the radical call to faithfulness in marriage spoken of by Jesus in the Gospel, and the joy all Christians receive when following the Lord's commandments. Below are suggestions for preaching.*

**Possible themes, with further resources**

- With the help of God's grace, it is always possible to follow his law (Sir 15:15), including his teachings about marriage. God's commandments are given for our good and lead to our happiness and salvation (Ps 119).
  - Pope Benedict XVI: "The 'commandment' of love is only possible because it is more than a requirement. Love can be 'commanded' because it has first been given" ([\*Deus Caritas Est\*](#), no. 14).
  - Pope Francis: "For the law is itself a gift of God which points out the way, a gift for everyone without exception; it can be followed with the help of grace" ([\*Amoris Laetitia\*](#), no. 295).
  
- God gives us wisdom and strength to do what is good, not what is popular (the "wisdom of this age," 1 Cor 2:6). Today, standing up for the truth about marriage as the lifelong union of one man and one woman is not popular, but it is good.
  - Visit [\*Marriage: Unique for a Reason\*](#) for videos, study guides, and catechesis about the authentic meaning of marriage.
  - Pope Francis: "In order to avoid all misunderstanding, I would point out that in no way must the Church desist from proposing the full ideal of marriage, God's plan in all its grandeur" ([\*Amoris Laetitia\*](#), no. 307).
  
- Reconciliation and forgiveness are at the heart of good relationships with other people, and also prepare us to offer fitting worship to God (Mt 5:23-24). Strained relationships are particularly difficult in marriages and families; we can ask God for the grace to forgive those who hurt us and to seek reconciliation with others.
  - Pope Francis: "One cannot live without seeking forgiveness, or at least, one cannot live at peace, especially in the family. We wrong one another every day. ... What we are asked to do is to promptly heal the wounds that we cause, to immediately reweave the bonds that break within the family" ([\*General Audience\*](#), Nov. 4, 2015).
  - Article: [\*"Forgiveness Fundamentals"\*](#) on *For Your Marriage*.

- Christ came not to “abolish the law or the prophets...but to fulfill” them (Mt 5:17). Rather than discounting the commandments as unimportant, he *deepens them*, asking his followers to apply them not just to their actions but to their hearts, too. Let us deepen our understanding of what Christ-like love asks of us.
  - Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation [\*Amoris Laetitia\*](#), Chapter 4: the exegesis of 1 Cor 13 is an excellent resource for married couples seeking to grow in love.
  - St. John Paul II, Catecheses on the Theology of the Body, nos. 24-59: an extended reflection on Jesus’s words in Mt 5 about the human heart and “historical man.”
  
- Christ is clear about the demands of the Gospel regarding anger (Mt 5:21-26), lust (Mt 5: 27-30) and divorce (Mt 5:31-32). God gives us strength to follow his teachings, and the Church offers support to those seeking to live holy, chaste, and faithful marriages.
  - On anger – Pope Francis: “Christians cannot ignore the persistent admonition of God’s word not to nurture anger...My advice is never to let the day end without making peace in the family” ([\*Amoris Laetitia\*](#), no. 104).
  - On lust and pornography – USCCB: [\*Create in Me a Clean Heart: A Pastoral Response to Pornography\*](#) (2015) and [\*Clean Heart series of pamphlets\*](#) (2016).
  - On marriages in crisis – *For Your Marriage* [list of ministries](#) that help married couples in difficulty or crisis.
  - On divorce – USCCB: [“Divorce and the Church’s Healing Ministry”](#) (2010).
  
- Jesus promises greatness to his faithful ones: “Whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 5:19). Parishioners who teach the faith as parents, godparents, catechists, etc., should be thanked and praised. Married couples who live their vocation faithfully provide an invaluable witness to the entire community.
  - Pope Francis: “Faithfulness to promises is a true masterpiece of humanity! If we look at its bold beauty, we are frightened, but if we disregard its courageous tenacity, we are lost. No relationship of love – no friendship, no form of loving, no happiness in the common good – reaches the height of our desire and of our hope, if this miracle does not come to dwell in the soul” ([General Audience](#), October 21, 2015).
  - Pope Francis: “With inner joy and deep comfort, the Church looks to families who remain faithful to the teachings of the Gospel, encouraging them and thanking them for the testimony they offer. For they bear witness, in a credible way, to the beauty of marriage as indissoluble and perpetually faithful ([\*Amoris Laetitia\*](#), 86).

## Other resources

- Pope Francis’s [catechesis on the family](#), January 7, 2015- November 18, 2015
- USCCB, *For Your Marriage* website: [www.foryourmarriage.org](http://www.foryourmarriage.org)
- USCCB, *Por Tu Matrimonio* website: [www.portumatrimonio.org](http://www.portumatrimonio.org)