



WORLD MARRIAGE DAY

Sponsored by Worldwide Marriage Encounter

SECOND SUNDAY IN FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY 10, 2008

Greetings to all Area Exec Couples,

We are pretty excited about all the activity around the country for World Marriage Day 2007. Just take a look at the World Marriage Day (WMD) section of the WWME website (wmd.wwme.org) to see descriptions of just some of the celebrations that we have been hearing about.

But this year's excitement now gives way to the thrill of planning for WMD 2008. As you know, it's not too early to begin thinking about what you can do next year. If your community holds WMD celebrations, congratulations, keep up the good work. We ARE doing good work, and we ARE making a difference. With all of the negative press that marriage and family get these days, it makes **World Marriage Day** even more important as it gives married couples, encountered and unencountered, an opportunity to celebrate their Sacramental call. If your community does not celebrate World Marriage Day, please consider starting in 2008. We need you! We need everyone! Your community and diocese deserve a World Marriage Day celebration!

Enclosed is a host of ideas for your 2008 WMD Coordinator Couple. In order to be good stewards and save money on postage, you are receiving the package electronically and we ask that you forward it to your WMD Coordinator immediately. We suggest that you meet with them and/or your Community Pillar, to review the materials together and brainstorm so your diocese can have the best possible celebration. Having the materials early, your couple/committee will be able to get a fast start on planning for your 2008 activities.

We are aware that February 10, 2008 is the 1st Sunday of Lent and that tends to be a very busy day in parishes and dioceses. If celebrating WMD on the 2nd Sunday is not possible in your diocese, we suggest shifting your WMD celebration forward or back a week to February 3rd or 17th, this year. The 2008 WMD: Clergy/Family Life package will have homily suggestions for all three Sundays.

We hope that each area conducts a celebration and are encouraging local WWME communities to schedule their own Longest Married and/or Husband and Wife of the Year. See below for details and hints for your celebrations.

Best wishes for a successful 2008 World Marriage Day!

Sincerely with Love,

Norm ♥ Judy and Father Bernie

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SECOND SUNDAY IN FEBRUARY

FEBRUARY 10, 2008

Greetings to All World Marriage Day Coordinators from your World Marriage Day National Ecclesial Team,

On World Marriage Day this year, celebrations of marriage were evident all across the United States and in many countries of the world. We have collected and posted on the WMD website (wmd.wwme.org) some descriptions of past World Marriage Day activities and a list of other countries that expressed interest in celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony.

It is now time to begin planning for World Marriage Day 2008. When you take a look at our website, you will note that some celebrations were elaborate and some were very simple. Your community can celebrate the day any way you wish. You may have a tradition of parades, picnics and celebrations at city cathedrals with television news coverage. Or your community may simply send our suggested World Marriage Day liturgy to all of your local pastors encouraging individual parish celebrations and have an article in the local newspaper. If you've never had a World Marriage Day celebration, please make 2008 your first annual celebration. Whatever you do will bring the goodness of marriage to the center stage for one important day.

All Dioceses' Family Life Offices and all Bishops will receive a letter directing them to the WMD Website and you may want to coordinate a Diocesan Celebration with them.

We are aware that February 10, 2008 is the 1st Sunday of Lent and that tends to be a very busy day in parishes and dioceses. If celebrating WMD on the 2nd Sunday of February is not possible in your diocese, we suggest shifting your WMD celebration forward or back a week to February 3rd or 17th, this year. The 2008 WMD: Clergy/Family Life package will have homily suggestions for all three Sundays.

Your package of materials to help make your WMD 2008 special for your community includes:

- A World Marriage Day overview cover sheet
- A Job Description for the Local WMD Coordinators
- Ideas and Suggestions for Making Your WMD the Best Ever
- Let the Press Help You - ideas on working with the media
- World Marriage Day Feedback form
- Reproducible letterhead and press release masthead

Please download the following items from the World Marriage Day Web site: wmd.wwme.org

- Clergy/Family Life Package which includes sample prayer services and liturgies for World Marriage Day.
- Couple Married Longest Contest for Your Local Area.
- A "Prayer for Our Marriage" that can be provided to Married Couples at WMD Celebrations. Local inviting information can be printed on the on the back of the prayer cards.

Best wishes for a successful and blessed World Marriage Day. We look forward to receiving your feedback form and hearing about your activities and events.

Sincerely with Love,

Norm ♥ Judy and Father Bernie

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World Marriage Day

Second Sunday in February

Sponsored by Worldwide Marriage Encounter, Inc.

AN OVERVIEW

Statement of Purpose

World Marriage Day honors husband and wife as head of the family, the basic unit of society. It salutes the beauty of their faithfulness, sacrifice and joy in daily married life.

History: The idea of celebrating marriage began in Baton Rouge, La., in 1981, when couples encouraged the mayor, the governor and the Bishop to proclaim St. Valentines Day as "We Believe in Marriage Day". The event was so successful; the idea was presented to and adopted by Worldwide Marriage Encounter's National Leadership.

By 1982, 43 Governors officially proclaimed the day and celebrations spread to U.S. military bases in several foreign countries. In 1983, the name was changed to "World Marriage Day", designated to be celebrated each year on the second Sunday in February.

In 1993, his Holiness, Pope John Paul II, imparted his Apostolic Blessings on World Marriage Day (available at wmd.wwme.org). WMD celebrations continue to grow and spread to more countries and faith expressions every year.

Symbol: Our World Marriage Day Symbol speaks readily of the role and values we proclaim. Husband and wife are symbolically seen as two candle-like figures, reminding us that married love calls us to help enlighten the world. The couple is joined by a heart, focusing on love as the power that fosters unity within the couple and generates the capacity to be life-giving and inspire others to fruitfulness and unity.

Theme: Our Theme for WMD has been permanently adopted as "Love One Another". This phrase is the commandment given us by Jesus in John 14. It speaks to us in a simple but challenging way of how our Father wishes us to live. Loving one another is a daily decision - simple, but challenging.

Prayer: "Father, as we prepare for WMD, we thank you for your tremendous gift of the Sacrament of Marriage. Help us to witness to its glory by a life of growing intimacy. Teach us the beauty of forgiveness so we may become more and more One in Heart, Mind and Body. Strengthen our dialogue and help us become living signs of your love. Make us grow more in love with the church so we may renew the Body of Christ. Make us a sign of unity in the name of Jesus, our Lord and Brother. Amen" - Fr. Bill Dilgen, S.M.M.

JOB DESCRIPTION FOR THE LOCAL WORLD MARRIAGE DAY COORDINATORS

1. Review and share this Coordinators package of materials with your area leadership, area board and other members of your Marriage Encounter community as a way to start discussion on the many possibilities for your local celebration of WMD. Remember that WMD is for the celebration of marriages regardless of the faith expression of couples and whether or not they have been on a Marriage Encounter weekend. In fact, inclusion of non-encountered couples in WMD events often leads them to register for a weekend.
2. Don't try to do everything yourself. Develop a team of enthusiastic couples as helpers to assist in the planning, preparations and staffing of any events and activities you plan for WMD.
3. Do your WMD planning with your team. We suggest that you use the **DOMe** planning method: **D**iagnose the situation now. What has your community done in the past? What has worked and what hasn't? Why did it or why did it not work?

Objectives for the next WMD should be set. Knowing what we have done in the past, what do we want to do this February? Be very specific about what events you want to organize for this WMD.

Methods of accomplishing your objectives are then listed. Exactly "how" will we accomplish these events? Take each event and list every activity that will have to be done to make it happen. Go one step further and actually assign the activity to a member of your team along with a date by which it should be completed. **For example:**

Event: A "Celebration of Marriage Day Liturgy"

Step	Activity	Who?	By When?	Done?
1	Contact Parish Priest	Tim and Joy	October 15	Yes
2	Meet with Liturgy Committee	Tim and Joy	November 5	
3	Develop Bulletin Notices	Tom and De	December 9	
4	Plan Reception after Mass	TJ and Meg	January 10	

Evaluate how well you are progressing. Each week, check on how well you and your team are doing at accomplishing all the activities necessary to pull off your planned events. This is easier to do when you have planned it out like the above. After WMD, evaluate the overall plan and what you will do differently next year to make your WMD celebration even better.

4. Contact your diocesan Family Life Director to discuss the local celebration of WMD and determine the amount of cooperation and the level of support that might be available from that office. You will find most are glad to hear from you and more than willing to work with you. They receive a letter along with a package of materials from the National WMD Team. We often have been surprised at the number of dioceses that have included funds in their budgets to support activities of the nature of WMD.
5. Contact your local Bishop or Archbishop about a diocesan-wide celebration of WMD. Your Bishop received a letter and package from the WMD Ecclesial Team in addition to the one their Family Life Director received. The package includes the Sample Prayer Services and Liturgies. Consider contacting local pastors about making WMD special in their individual parishes. Give them a copy of the Sample Prayer Services and Liturgies.

IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR MAKING YOUR WORLD MARRIAGE DAY THE BEST EVER

The following are only a few of the ideas that have been enacted over the years and should be considered as suggestions, not expectations. We hope these ideas act as a stimulus for you and your community to come up with even greater ways to celebrate World Marriage Day. Remember, celebrating WMD is one of the rare opportunities we get to share with the world the wonderful gifts that God has brought into our lives. It is another way to spread the Gospel.

Spreading the word. . . .

1. Create and distribute a flyer with information about World Marriage Day through the Catholic schools in your diocese and other local church organizations. Include information about the events you have planned such as a special Mass celebration, a dance for married couples, a family picnic celebrating marriage, etc.
2. Stuff your parish bulletins with a flyer on WMD that includes a collection of parish members' statements regarding why they personally believe in marriage. Don't forget to include comments from single members, widowed members, priests and nuns.
3. Produce and circulate a home activities brochure for parish families giving them suggested activities they can engage in on WMD and throughout the year.
4. Notify all of your local newspapers, radio stations and television stations about WMD and encourage them to join in the celebration.

Spreading the joy. . . .

5. Assemble a video of married couples and families from your parish and show the scenes in front of the church as people arrive for Mass, as a part of the homily/sermon, a post communion meditation, or at a reception after the services.
6. Display wedding pictures of parish members in a highly visible area, like the church foyer. Include pictures of your priests' ordinations as well. Identify each person in the photo and include dates.
7. Share different marriage customs with the parish by having couples from different ethnic backgrounds explain customs unique to their heritage.
8. Organize "couple" events such as bake sales, garage/yard sales, and car washes to raise money for charities - all in celebration of WMD.

Celebrating the love....

9. Plan and promote a diocesan wide (or city wide) essay writing contest about marriage. Recognize the winners at a special event with a unique prize. It's amazing how easy it is to compile an impressive list of gift prizes that local commercial businesses are willing to donate. The bishop or local political leaders could be asked to present the awards. Media coverage is a possibility. Utilize your church bulletins, neighborhood and local newspapers to spread the word. Don't forget to make provisions for elementary, junior high and high school contestants. In the lower age groups you may want to make it a poster contest. Remember, when the children are involved, so are their parents.

10. Promote a student "art show" of hand drawn pictures of the entrants' parents. Display the works of art in your church foyer, hall or at a reception. Be sure to recognize the artists in some way.
11. Organize a couple and/or family bowling, skating party, swimming party, picnic, or some other event that will allow your community (encountered and non-encountered) to come together. These events could proceed or follow other WMD celebrations such as a special Mass.
12. Reserve pews in front of your church for couples married 25, 30, 35 or 40 years or more and give them a certificate, flowers, or some other remembrance. Invite them to receive communion as a couple. They may be part of the readings, processional or recessional.
13. Request that your priest recognize married couples present at Mass by having all married couples stand, then start seating them in increments of five years, until the couple married longest is left standing. After a round of applause, present that couple with a certificate, flowers, or a gift.
14. Reverse the above process to recognize the newest married couple in attendance.
15. Hold a reception for all parish members after services. Pictures of parish members' wedding ceremonies can decorate the room. Serve wedding cake and punch. Have the couple that has been married the longest cut the cake.
16. Organize a special afternoon Mass for your diocese to be followed by a "Sweetheart Dance". Serve wedding cake and display wedding pictures.
17. Encourage your pastor to incorporate the renewal of wedding vows into the liturgy on WMD for all married couples in attendance.
18. Encourage your Bishop to write a letter promoting marriage and family for World Marriage Day. Reproduce the letter in all parish bulletins or encourage that it be read during the liturgy on WMD.
19. Design a presentation (try PowerPoint) about the sacrament of marriage for your parish's CCE, RCIA, bible study, and other church sponsored educational programs. Present the topic sometime in the weeks leading up to WMD.
20. Organize a parish prayer vigil for the continued growth of marriage and family relationships, in your parish, your community, nationally and worldwide.
21. Encourage your pastor to relate how his parent's marriage may have played a part in his decision to enter the priesthood.
22. Encourage your priest to use the enclosed Sample Prayer Services & Liturgies for Masses on WMD, or to develop a special liturgy himself devoted to marriage.
23. Check out & download the WMD Sample Prayer Services & Liturgies World Marriage Day Web Site - wmd.wwme.org and share it with your local Church Parishes and Liturgy planning committees.

WORLD MARRIAGE DAY 2008 FEEDBACK

We know you worked hard! Now take a few minutes to tell us what you did.

Marriage Encounter Faith Expression: _____ Section No. _____

City: _____ State: _____ Country: _____

Your Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone (optional): _____

Fax (optional): _____

For which previous years have you been involved in planning World Marriage Day events?

A brief description of the things you did to celebrate World Marriage Day:

A brief description of the media coverage you received for World Marriage Day and our celebration events (include newspapers, magazines, radio, television, newsletters, church bulletins):

Please send copies of news articles, photos and any other coverage of WMD or events.

Tell us what you think of the World Marriage Day planning materials that you received :

(Rating of 1 to 10: 1 = poor and 10 = excellent)

Timeliness: _____ Appearance: _____ Format: _____ Informative: _____
Supportive: _____

Comments:

What else would help you in your planning?



Press Release

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SECOND SUNDAY IN FEBRUARY

Contact:

For Release: