



**Message for Marriage Sunday
7 February 2025
His Eminence Frank Cardinal Leo
Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto**

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

May Jesus and Mary be in your souls.

I am writing you in anticipation of *Marriage Sunday* which we will be celebrating on the weekend of February 8/9, 2025. Our annual celebration affords us the opportunity to not only reflect on the sacrament of marriage but also pray for couples, young and old, who have responded positively to the vocation of holy matrimony. We also remember those who are discerning marriage, those preparing to enter into this life-long calling, those who lead and accompany the preparation, those who are experiencing difficulties, and those who have experienced the loss of a spouse. I am grateful to all couples for their fidelity and witness to God's love in the world.

Marriage is first and foremost a gift from God (1Cor. 7:7). With this simple yet profound truth we recognize that it is far from being a mere impulse of nature, but a supernatural reality and one in which we see God's providential and life-giving plan for us. Pope Francis described marriage as "a precious sign, for 'when a man and a woman celebrate the sacrament of marriage, God is, as it were, 'mirrored' in them; he impresses in them his own features and the indelible character of his love. Marriage is the icon of God's love for us" (*Amoris Laetitia*, 121).

During this Jubilee Holy Year, Our Holy Father has asked us to consider what it means to be *Pilgrims of Hope* – men and women who are called to not only *live in hope* but *be signs of hope*. In the very fabric of marriage, we have a tangible sign of hope; namely the bond that is created between the couple. The sacramental bond, characterized by fidelity and permanence, is a symbol of the union between God and humanity. God is always faithful; his love is unconditional, generative and unchanging. Our hope is based in the certainty that nothing and no one will ever separate us from the love of God (cf. *Spes Non Confundit*, 3). Further, St. Paul compares the relationship between husbands and wives, to the relationship between Christ and the Church. Christ loves the Church so deeply that He gave Himself up for her, and this love is mirrored in the sacrificial, self-giving love that spouses are called to live out (cf. Eph. 5:25-32). Whether it is the Father's fidelity or Christ's sacrificial love, both are mirrored in marriage and serve as signs of hope interwoven by the grace of the Holy Spirit.



To those who have experienced the pain of a broken relationship or the loss of a spouse, know that you are close to my heart and in my prayers. You are not alone. There are programs and ministries available throughout the archdiocese to help those men and women who have endured these challenges and moments of great suffering. I hope that these resources will assist in accompanying those who have faced many difficult times, offering hope and light through the darkness.

As part of our Marriage Sunday 2025 celebrations, Bishop Ivan Camilleri will preside over a special Holy Eucharist to honour married couples, with special recognition for those celebrating 25th, 40th, 50th, 60th and 60+ wedding anniversaries during the course of 2025. The Mass will take place at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, 9 February 2025, at St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica. All married couples will have an opportunity to renew their marriage commitment.

In closing, I would like to restate my sincere gratitude and esteem for all married couples throughout the archdiocese. I would also like to express my deep appreciation for all those who are engaged in marriage preparation and marriage enrichment programs throughout our archdiocese, and for all those who, in one way or another, provide ongoing support, inspiration, encouragement and hope to married couples. Your ecclesial service truly helps to foster healthy relationships and strong families infused with faith and commitment, so desperately needed in our day.

May the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph intercede bountiful blessings from the Lord upon you and keep you safe in his grace.