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**Suggestions for Prayers and Blessings**

**Readings of the Day:**

1st Reading: Jeremiah 17:5-8; God is the source of all that we need.

Psalm: Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6; Response (40:5a) Blessed are they who hope in the Lord.

2nd Reading: 1 Cor 15:12, 16-20; The Resurrection is our hope and proof for life after death.

Alleluia: Lk 6:23ab; Rejoice and be glad; your reward will be great in heaven.

Gospel: Lk 6:17, 20-26; When we are faced with struggles, our God is with us, and we are blessed.

**For your newsletter:**

All of us face adversities. But when we struggle, can we still find the ways we are blessed? What or who are the blessings in your life that help you face the things that are most difficult?

This weekend in our parishes, we celebrate World Marriage Day. This is an opportunity to pray for those whose marriages have broken down, those who are struggling in their relationship and to celebrate with couples who have been happily married for many years. We remember too, those whose spouses have died. As we pray for married life in our communities, we give thanks for the Vocation of Marriage and for God’s everlasting covenant, to be with us always through the tough times.

**Picture for your newsletter or PowerPoint presentation:**

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The picture chosen is included separately as a download for ease of use.

**For those parishes, wishing to offer the married congregation, an opportunity to renew their marriage vows, please see below.**

Renewal of Marriage Vows

This may take place after the homily or after Communion. Invite married couples to stand, facing one another.

**Priest:**

On the day of your wedding, you declared your love for one another in the presence of the church’s minister and the community. Christ has abundantly blessed your love and will continue to do so. He consecrated you in baptism and enriched and strengthened you in the Sacrament of Matrimony, so that you could carry out the duties of marriage in mutual and lasting fidelity.

The church congratulates you and rejoices with you on this special day dedicated to Marriage. And so, on this happy day I invite you to renew your marriage vows.

**Wives:** Husbands name, I renew the commitment I made to you on our wedding day.

I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honour you all the days of my life.

**Husbands:** Wife’s name, I renew the commitment I made to you on our wedding day.

I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honour you all the days of my life.

Priest: You have renewed your wedding vows in the presence of the Lord and this community. May the Lord in His goodness, deepen your commitment to one another and fill you both with his blessings.

I invite you now to seal your love with a kiss (or some other sign of your love for each other).

**Blessing for married couples:**

Loving God you created these couples for each other.

We thank you for the richness of your creation.

We ask your blessing on them and their families.

For the couples here today:

May you always love and support each other and be patient with one another.

May you have true friends to stand by you in joy and sorrow.

May you be deeply involved in the events of your times.

May you come to old age and grey hair in peace and contentment.

May you remember that God is love and those who abide in love, abide in God and God in them.

**Alternative options**

**Blessing for Married Couples** (addressing God)

Loving God, thank you for the richness of your creation.

You are loving and kind in all you do.

In your tender care, you give us the wonderful gift of marriage.

Bless these couples.

With patient understanding, may they love and support one another.

May their friendship be deep and true,

Offering consolation in times of sorrow,

Sharing gladness in times of joy.

May their love for each other lead them to be present in their communities,

Involved in the events of their times.

May they come to old age in peace and contentment.

May they remember that God is love and those who abide in love, abide in God, and God in them.

Through Christ we prayer. Amen

**Blessing for Married Couples** (addressing the couples)

Calling to mind God’s goodness,

Remembering that God is with us in all we do,

We ask God’s blessing on you.

With patience and understanding, may you love and support one another in all you do.

May your friendship be deep and true,

Bringing each other consolation in times of sorrow,

And sharing gladness in times of joy.

May your love for each other lead you to be present in you communities,

Sharing your gifts with the poor,

Being involved in the events of your times,

May you come to old age in peace and contentment.

May you remember that God is love and those who abide in love,

abide in God, and God in them.

Through Christ we pray. Amen

**Suggestions for prayers of the Faithful – Prayers of Intercession**

***The following are suggestions that can be added to your parish prayers, please edit, or adapt the prayers to suit your own congregation.***

On this World Marriage Day,

God of Love, you promise blessing to those who experience poverty, hunger, loss, or exclusion. May married couples always turn to you in their times of adversity, remembering that you are the source of the love that holds them together.

**Response: E te Ariki: Whakarongo mai ra ki a matou or**

**Lord hear us/ Lord hear our prayer**

For those, whose dreams of marriage have faded,

God of Wisdom, we offer to you and your merciful embrace anyone who is suffering because of divorce, separation or loneliness. Remind them that you will never leave or forsake them, that they are loved and cherished and held in the palm of your hands. **Response**

For lifelong love,

We give you thanks for married couples who, through their trust in you, have enjoyed a long and happy marriage.

May the witness of their love, give courage and hope to those preparing to enter the Sacrament of Marriage at this time. **Response**

For suffering in the pandemic,

God of comfort. We pray especially today for couple’s who are separated by distance, illness or circumstances due to the pandemic. Through these struggles, may they know that you are with them. **Response**

For those who have died,

Eternal God, we pray for all who have died, especially the departed spouses, parents, grandparents, friends, and relatives of those gathered here today. May perpetual light shine upon them and all who have died recently. **Response**

**Further suggestions:**

As the congregation leaves the church, gatherers could offer (if appropriate under the alert levels), prayer cards (see attached documents for printing) or love heart, foil wrapped chocolates available in packs from countdown or the warehouse.

There are a number of Diocesan Marriage Educators who would be willing to assist you in the organisation and delivery of this special Mass. They may be present in your parish. Please contact the Marriage and Family Life desk/Marriage ministries team in your own Diocese for further information.

CNME are also offering an online, livestream ‘date night’ for couples on the evening of World Marriage Day:

World Marriage Day 13th February 2022 at 7.30 pm Save the date! Book in some intentional time as a couple to enrich your relationship…. right from the comfort of your own home! Grab some wine + cheese and tune in at 7.30 pm for a live talk by Megan and Nahum Kozak of Lighthouse Relationships. Suitable for couples setting out on their marriage journey to couples who have been married for years. Registration is free! https://www.cdh.org.nz/events

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