



CATHOLIC CHARITIES

Diocese of Wilmington

*For 180 years - A legacy of caring service*

## CATHOLIC CHARITIES 180<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

### FAMILY LIFE BUREAU PRAYER SERVICE

#### INTRODUCTION

**Leader:** The Family Life Bureau helps build and strengthen families and individuals. Those preparing for marriage, those wanting to strengthen their marriages, and those whose marriages have ended, because of either death or divorce – all find support in the programs of the Family Life Bureau.

**Reader 1:** A reading from the prophet Hosea. Hosea interprets his marriage as a prophetic symbol, announcing and making explicit in representation the covenant union between God and Israel.

Israel, I will make you my wife, I will be true and faithful, I will show you constant love and mercy and make you mine forever. I will keep my promise and make you mine, and you will acknowledge me as Lord. At that time, I will answer the prayers of my people Israel. I will make rain fall on the earth, and the earth will produce grain and grapes and olives. I will establish my people in the land and make them prosper. I will show love to those who were called “Unloved,” and to those who were called “Not – My – People” I will say “You are my people” and they will answer, “You are our God.”

**Leader:** Our response will be “May the Lord bless you and keep you.”

**Leader:** For the many couples who prepare for their married life together through their participation in the Family Life Pre-Cana Program, we pray,

**ALL:** **May the Lord bless you and keep you.**

**Leader:** For all the married couples who celebrate their Silver and Golden wedding anniversaries at the Annual Wedding Anniversary Mass, we pray,

**ALL:** **May the Lord bless you and keep you.**

**Leader:** For those who mourn the loss of a spouse and find encouragement and support in the Family Life “You Are Not Alone” group, we pray,

**ALL:** **May the Lord bless you and keep you.**

**Leader:** For those who have lost a spouse and now find fellowship in the Family Life Post-Cana Group, we pray,

**ALL:** **May the Lord bless you and keep you.**

**Leader:** For those who are going through the anguish of a separation or divorce and who need valuable life adjustment skills from the Family Life Stepping Stones program, we pray,

**ALL:** **May the Lord bless you and keep you.**

**Leader:** For all the pre-teen and teen boys and girls and their parents who participate in the Let's Talk and Let's Keep Talking human sexuality programs that integrate Catholic values at this important time in their lives, we pray,

**ALL:** **May the Lord bless you and keep you.**

**Leader:** Good and gracious God, we pray that the families touched through the programs of Family Life Services grow in Your love to truly become domestic church.

**ALL:** **AMEN**

**Reader 2:** Jesus' first public miracle occurs at a wedding feast. A Reading from the Gospel according to John:

On the third day, there was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine."

(And) Jesus said to her, "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come."

His mother said to the servers, "Do whatever he tells you."

Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, "Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter." So they took it.

And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from (although the servers who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now."

Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.

**Leader:**

Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary, bless our families. Graciously inspire in us the unity, peace and mutual love that you found in your own family in the little town of Nazareth.

Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother, nourish our families with your faith and your love. Keep us close to your Son, Jesus, in all our sorrows and joys.

Joseph, Foster-father to Jesus, guardian and spouse of Mary, keep our families safe from harm. Help us in all times of discouragement or anxiety.

Holy Family of Nazareth, make our families one with you. Help us to be instruments of peace. Grant that love, strengthened by grace, may prove mightier than all the weaknesses and trials through which our families sometimes pass. May we always have God at the center of our families.

**ALL: AMEN**