

Auxiliary Bishop Offers Support for World Marriage Day

by Most Rev. Joseph W. Estabrook D.D.

FYI: This is a copy of the email sent 12/31/04 to all the priests in the Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Navy and Marine Corps. Thanks a million for your letter in August 2004. I thought it would be best to send this to them now so it wouldn't get lost in the weeds of the holidays. They can easily put something together in January, even base-wide if they wish, especially with that spectacular package on your web site. Thanks again and God's richest blessings on you all in Marriage Encounter.

+Bishop Joseph Estabrook

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Dear Brothers in Christ,

I would like to first of all wish all of you a very happy and holy New Year. Thank you for being such good shepherds to the men and women in our Air Force, Army, and Navy/Marine Corps, Coast Guard and their families.

For Command support - you can tie this to message to retention if you wish because I personally believe that all retention decisions are made in the home. A good healthy home creates a safe, healthy, emotionally balanced working environment and the accomplishment of the mission.

But more than that for us: supporting the Sacrament of Marriage in our secular world today is essential for the Church's mission. I believe that strong faith-filled marriages build strong faith-filled families and these build up our community of the Church. I also believe that such faith-filled families will take a call to the Vocations of Marriage and Priesthood very seriously.

World Marriage Day is the second Sunday in February - February 13, 2005. I would urge you to use this occasion to address the sanctity of Marriage and the Family, and to use it as an occasion to evangelize. We need to bring back to our faith community those who may have fallen away for whatever reason. Your people are the best ones to do that. Perhaps they can invite them on that Sunday to join them at Mass and renew their marriage vows, or to participate in a social activity celebrating marriage and the family. Some even have a family retreat the day before with serious talks mixed with fun activities and a cookout for everyone.

A full World Marriage Day Package is available to be downloaded from the World Marriage Day Web Site: wmd.wmme.org. Please look at the button: WMD: Clergy/Family Life Package at the top left corner - it's available in both English and Spanish. The package is incredible! It's full of ready-made ideas, including a sample homily, all put together for you.

I encourage you to think about asking a few committed couples to put the day's celebration together and use the activity as a means of bringing friends and neighbors to the Church and fostering vocations. Sometimes the only thing people need to make a move is to be asked.

God's fullest blessings on you in your ministry this coming year.

In Christ,
+Joe

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