

History of World Marriage Day

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 was 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**. **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 15:12. 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.

Year 2004 World Marriage Day National Team

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