



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Diocese of Youngstown

February 11/12, 2023

World Marriage Day

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In the summer of 2015, Pope Francis announced a reform for couples who are married outside of the Catholic Church to engage in the process of having their marriages validated (recognized) in the Church. The Holy Father wrote...[The zeal to reform has been fueled by the enormous number of Faithful who are often separated from the proper discipline of the Church. Charity and mercy require that the Church, as a mother, to make herself closer to her children who consider themselves separated.]

I invite those who have been married civilly, but not in the Church, or those of you who are cohabiting with the intention of marriage, to consider having your marriage recognized and blessed before the Church. If you are currently living in a union not blessed by the Church, please see today's bulletin for more information on how to begin the validation process. In light of the annulment process reform that has taken place at the directive of the Holy Father, I encourage you to meet with your parish priest, deacon, or parish leader to initiate the validation process.

God's love, mercy and forgiveness are always present when we call upon Him. It is my hope that Catholics separated from the Church because of their marital status will know that the Church, in her love and mercy, is inviting you back to our mutual home.

Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend David J. Bonnar
Bishop of Youngstown