

## Chaplain's Bulletin January 14, 2024



Dear Folks,

I'm usually careful about making predictions, but I will boldly say this: in 2024, we will have a lot of reasons to be angry, frustrated, and worried. In other words, we will have a lot of opportunity to complain. I see lots and lots of energy given to complaining. I would pose a question for 2024: How can we channel our energy most effectively toward making the situation better?

Last week there was a lot of conversation about a recent document (Fiducia Supplicans) from the Vatican about the pastoral meaning of blessings and people in same sex relationships. This has led to people concerned that it will cause confusion about Catholic teaching, and will be exploited by people with agendas. They are right. How could it not cause confusion when people are already so confused? It is my observation that most Catholics know very little, and many know less than nothing, about the meaning of marriage, and why we don't believe a same sex couple could be married (just because one goes through a ceremony does not mean they are married).

People with same sex attraction are beloved by God, and we are called to show them that love in how we treat them. That includes teaching God's truth about family, marriage, and sexuality. God loves all people; He does not love all behaviors. We are called to love people with all different kinds of sins, but we are not called to encourage, enable, or condone sinful behavior.

We can spend hours parsing what the Vatican should or should not have said, or we could use our time and energy more productively. We can make this situation better by getting a deeper understanding of the issues involved and adding to the conversation in the faith community and in the world.

If you have access to the FORMED app, Trent Horn gives an excellent one hour talk about "How to Talk About Marriage and Same-Sex Unions." It is good for starting the conversation with people who don't share our faith, and that the understanding of the unique marriage as one man and one woman has a basis in our basic humanity, not just religion. He recommends two books that helped him prepare the talk. "What Is Marriage?: Man and Woman: A Defense" by

Sherif Girgis, Ryan T Anderson, and Robert George, and “Getting the Marriage Conversation Right: A Guide for Effective Dialogue” by William May.

For further learning about same sex attraction and living the Catholic faith, I recommend “Why I Don’t Call Myself Gay: How I Reclaimed my Sexual Reality and Found Peace” by Daniel Mattson and the video: “Desire Of the Everlasting Hills” There is an organization for people with same sex attraction who seek to live the Catholic faith called Courage International ([couragerc.org](http://couragerc.org)).

It is for us to present the truth of marriage, family, and sexuality in a way that is compelling and that shows it is good news. It is for us to show people the love of God. It begins with us learning more ourselves. We have a huge task ahead of us, and everyone can be a part of it.

During this year, whenever we read or hear something that upsets us, concerns us, or angers us, I propose the question: How can my response be ordered to making the situation better? Even a teeny bit?

Blessings,

Fr. Jim