



Diocese of Gallup

Office of the Bishop
Post Office Box 1338
Gallup, New Mexico 87305-1338

February 14, 2020
St. Cyril and St. Methodius
St. Valentine

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I am pleased to promulgate today *Preparing for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony – a Policy for the Diocese of Gallup*. I do so on the feast of St. Valentine, the third century priest who died defending marriage, during a period of social decadence in the declining Roman Empire, where marriage between one man and one woman was considered unfavorably. St. Valentine was arrested and eventually martyred for secretly witnessing marriages of those young couples who wished to remain in that union for life.

Pope St. John Paul II taught that marriage is a “Primordial Sacrament”. Taking his cue from St. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, (especially chapter 5:31-33), the saintly Pontiff drew attention to the world the great vocation of marriage. Speaking of the “*sacrament as a visible sign, is constituted with man, inasmuch as he is a ‘body’, through his ‘visible’ masculinity and femininity. The body in fact, and only the body, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine. It has been created to transfer into the visible reality of the world the mystery hidden from eternity in God, and thus to be a sign of it.*”¹ This is true of all those validly married. It is even more so of those united in the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony.

When called to the sacrament of Holy Matrimony, and they live this sacrament fully, our couples give a wonderful witness to this “great mystery” of the eternal love of God.

Preparing for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony – a Policy for the Diocese of Gallup gives pastors the conditions and norms that will guide them in the preparation of couples for the reception the sacrament. The *Supplement* gives a summary and review of the fundamental doctrine on Marriage for those in charge of preparing the couples as well as a helpful aid in evaluating extraordinary situations, along with resources for the preparation.

¹ Man and Woman, He Created Them, *A Theology of the Body*, Pauline Books and Media, Boston 2006, p. 505.

I want to thank you for all your work in preparing our faithful to receive fruitfully the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. As St. John Paul reminded us: "*So many human beings and so many Christians search in marriage for the fulfillment of their vocation. So many want to find it in the way of salvation and holiness.*"² It is my hope that this new policy will help pastors and all those who help in the preparation of those receiving this sacrament to better receive it and live this important vocation in the world.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "+ James Seán Wall".

+ James Seán Wall
Bishop of Gallup

² *Ibid.*, page 222.