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December 23, 2023
St. John of Kanty, Priest

Fiducia Supplicans – On The Pastoral Meaning of Blessings

Dear Pastors, Clergy, Parish Life Directors of the Diocese of Saskatoon:

As I am sure you know, on 18 December 2023 the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith released the Declaration *Fiducia Supplicans*, which responds to questions that had been raised regarding the possibility of offering blessings to persons living in irregular unions, including same-sex relationships.

While explicitly affirming the Church's traditional understanding of marriage, *Fiducia Supplicans* allows pastors to bless people who freely request a blessing, and who are seeking God's help to live His will in deeper faithfulness and fidelity. The Declaration makes clear that such blessings are to be directed to the persons themselves versus their situation, and that they must be spontaneously requested. This includes blessings of persons who are "...couples of the same sex." Such blessings are not rituals or liturgical actions.


The guiding principle in the Declaration is the fact that the very request for a blessing represents an openness to God's grace forgiveness and mercy and can be an occasion for greater trust in God. *Fiducia Supplicans* underscores that blessings cannot be offered in a way that causes any confusion about the nature of *marriage*, which the document affirms is the only "...context that sexual relations find their natural, proper, and fully human meaning."

The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (DDF) states that with such blessings, "...there is no intention to legitimize anything, but rather to open one's life to God, to ask for His help to live better, and also to invoke the Holy Spirit so that the values of the Gospel may be lived with greater faithfulness."

On the memorial of St. John Kanty, we celebrate a priest whose love of Theology and Sacred Scripture inspired a compassionate heart for all of God's people. He worked tirelessly for the poor and the searching, and stated that pastors are called to avoid "harshness" and to respond with "...good humor, patience, kindness and love." I look forward to discerning with all of you how the declaration might help us continue to serve all people in our faith community.

Blessings to you all as we get ready to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord.

Sincerely, in Christ,

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✠ Most Reverend Mark A. Hagemoen
Bishop of Saskatoon