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Statement Regarding the Vatican's Declaration *Fiducia Supplicans*

Madison – The document issued today by the Holy See, specifically from the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, entitled *Fiducia Supplicans*, affirms the teaching, which the Church has always held under the guidance of Scripture and the natural law, that marriage by its nature can only ever be between a man and a woman, and that sexual activity can never be moral outside of the marital relationship, in which it finds its true meaning. For this reason, the document also affirms that sexual relationships between people who are not married, including relationships between people of the same sex, "cannot be compared in any way to marriage," and could never be liturgically blessed or recognized in any liturgical rite or in any ritualistic way that would affirm such a relationship as morally licit or compatible with human flourishing.

At the same time, the document recognizes that the term "blessing" can have a broader meaning outside of the liturgical, ritualistic context, and that a "pastoral" blessing can simply be a prayer invoking God's power and care, healing, and assistance, such as disposing hearts to be changed by God or restraining the power of evil in the world. No sin is so great that it totally cuts off the possibility of God's healing love during this lifetime, and even in the worst of situations there can be some elements out of which God can bring good. Thus, the document recognizes that even those in immoral relationships, recognizing themselves to be in need of His help, can ask for and receive a blessing in the pastoral realm at the prudence and at the option of the minister, when this is done informally and spontaneously, outside of any liturgical or ritualized format, and always without creating an impression of approval or legitimization of status, of falsely implying any sort of equivalency with marriage, or creating any scandal (leading others to do evil) or confusion among the faithful.

The blessing put forth in *Fiducia Supplicans* is not meant to be a legitimization of same-sex unions, but an opportunity for people in irregular relationships to open their lives 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" (FS 40). "Any blessing will be an opportunity for a renewed proclamation of the kerygma, an invitation to draw ever closer to the love of Christ" (FS, 44).

Read *Fiducia Supplicans* and other related documents at: [madisondiocese.org/pr](https://www.madisondiocese.org/pr)

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