

Pope Francis has called for a year devoted to marriage and family. So you might ask, what does this mean? And, what is this all about?

**“Families are the first place in which we are formed as persons and, at the same time, the “bricks” for the building up of society.” Pope Francis**

**“O God, whose eternal design family life has its foundation...” Collect Prayer**  
**Opening for the Year of Marriage and Family Mass**

When we celebrate, we honor and pray for the Holy Sanctity of Marriage and the saving gift of family. But we do not just celebrate and pray for our own households and those we know that are married, we also celebrate and honor the marriage of Christ and His bride the Church, and the family of God. We can do this by first and foremost, praying for our own marriages and that of others and for our individual families that create one body of Christ.

**“God makes one existence of the two spouses - the Bible says ‘one flesh’ in the image of His love, in a communion which draws its origin and its strength from God.” Pope Francis**

Even if our families are far away or seem to not exist by society's definition, we have families within our friends, workplaces, places of worship and as the family of God. Just as for the gift of marriage we might be married or we might have experienced the pain of divorce or the death of a spouse, the Sacrament of Marriage itself is what we honor and uphold. We unite as a family to pray for all marriages that the love of Christ may be made known in the sacred bond of Holy Matrimony.

**“And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body.” Colossians 3:15**

**“It is impossible to quantify the strength and depth of humanity contained in a family” Pope Francis**

We all hold a very important role in the family of God. Whether that is to be married, raising a family, contributing in another way. There are no small parts in God's family. That's why He created the Church to be the family, so that every one will know that they are ONE body in Christ. We have been called to take a year to build up the dignity and respect that the family deserves. What will be your part this next year? How will you share with all what God has given to you?

God,  
Teach me to be one in your family,  
one mind, one body and of one Spirit.  
May all grow in greater love for the sanctity  
of marriage and the humbling power of the  
family. Let's us not renounce our families, but  
embrace and work together, to create one  
unified body of Christ.  
With the Pascal Lamb as the bridegroom,  
and His bride the Church, let us know renew  
our covenant as the Family of God.  
Let us strengthen with love and uphold one  
another with dignity and respect.  
All the days of our lives.  
Amen.