

**Convalidation Mass
December 7, 2019**

“Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all within me, his holy name.”

These are the words of the Psalm that we proclaimed. These are the words in our hearts today as we gather with you wonderful couples who have prepared to enter into the Sacrament of Matrimony. It is a day of joy and grace, so “Bless the Lord, O my soul.”

It is your souls that have brought you here. It is true that from the beginning God made men and women to seek each other out. We hear this in the first reading. God made the woman as the perfect equal and companion of the man. The man was made for her as well. This is something written into your bodies, into your beings. You felt this calling in your hearts to find one who is “bone of your bones and flesh of your flesh.” God has been moving in your lives, bringing you each to your beloved. But we are here for something new today.

Marriage is a natural part of human life, but we are here for a sacrament. You seek to join yourselves not in some merely human contract. No, my friends, you are here to declare before God and the Church a new covenant with each other. There have been so many moments you have shared, good times and bad. You have grown together and learned about each other. But today you are going to know each other in a far deeper way. You are saying yes to love that never fails. It is the love we heard about in the second reading. It is the love that comes from God. You grooms, you are saying “yes” to loving your brides like Jesus loves his Church. He gave everything he was, and he held nothing back for himself; he sacrificed all of his

being because of his love for the Church. And brides, you are saying “yes” to loving your grooms like the Church loves Jesus. You are giving everything you are to draw closer to him, receiving his love and letting it expand and bring new life to the world; the Church gives her life in love for her Groom. This is why the Gospel commands so clearly that this sacrament is to last for your whole life together. No matter what challenges or difficulties come your way, you are saying yes to love each other through it, and to come out stronger than ever. This new love you are beginning today will bear light to the world. As Pope Francis put it: “Marriage is the most beautiful thing that God has created... the man and woman who become one flesh, are the image of God.” (1 October 2016). How beautiful then that you get to do this in the season of Advent, with this wreath showing light growing in the darkness. With your new sacrament today, I urge you to go and be that light in the world.

So, bless the Lord, O my soul! Today is a day of beauty and celebration. Renew your trust in the love of God and the Church. Renew your trust in the love you share as a couple. No matter what, remember the power of the love by which you seal yourselves today. “It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails” (1 Cor).