



December 28, 2023

Statement on *Fiducia Supplicans* (FS)

To the Clergy, Religious and Faithful in the Diocese of Salina

On December 18, 2023, the Vatican issued a declaration, signed by the Holy Father, titled *Fiducia Supplicans* (Supplicating Trust) on the Pastoral Meaning of Blessings. The document discusses offering blessings to people, specifically blessings for couples in irregular situations and same-sex relationships.

There has been a lot of discussion on the document regarding what it says and what it means. I encourage all of you to read the text itself (it's 45 paragraphs long).

I want to emphasize that the document in no way changes the Church's teaching on marriage. In fact, the document reaffirms what constitutes a true marriage: "an exclusive, stable, and indissoluble union between a man and a woman, naturally open to the generation of children" (FS, 4). It adds that "this conviction is grounded in the perennial Catholic doctrine of marriage, it is only in this context that sexual relations find their natural, proper, and fully human meaning. The Church's doctrine on this point remains firm" (FS, 4).

So, what does it mean then to bless couples in irregular situations and same-sex relationships? Here again, I want to emphasize that a blessing is not for people seeking a legitimization of a same sex union. A same-sex union cannot be blessed, since any sexual union outside of the marriage of one man and one woman contradicts the Gospel and the Church's teaching.

The document does allow the blessing of individuals in irregular situations or a same-sex couple. Jesus always responds with mercy to those seeking his mercy and inviting them to repentance and discipleship. The document emphasizes that people who desire a blessing ordinarily want help, for they "acknowledge that the life of the

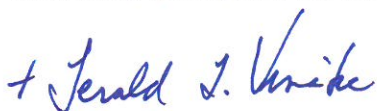
Church springs from the womb of God's mercy and helps us to move forward to live better, and to respond to the Lord's will" (FS 20).

The blessing should never be done in a liturgical or ceremonial way which would give the false idea of blessing a union contrary to the Gospel. The blessing is intended for persons who "recognizing themselves to be destitute and in need of his help—do not claim a legitimation of their own status, but who beg that all that is true, good, and humanly valid in their lives and their relationships be enriched, healed, and elevated by the presence of the Holy Spirit" (FS, 31). Again, I want to emphasize that the blessing is for those seeking to live better. The Church is called to bless the person, not the sin. The document states, "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" (FS 40).

We are all sinners in need of God's blessings and mercy. The Church desires to bring healing to the person. We often invite people to come up for a blessing during Holy Communion at Mass for various reasons, including when people are living in a situation that is contrary to the commandments. The reception of a blessing expresses humility, a desire for conversion, help in overcoming sin, and a path to holiness.

The document concludes by stating that, "Any blessing will be an opportunity for renewed proclamation of the kerygma, and invitation to draw ever closer to the love of Christ" (FS, 44). Indeed, the Bible is full of conversion stories such as the woman at the well, Zaccheus the tax collector, the woman caught in adultery, and St. Peter himself. May all people "feel that they are still blessed, notwithstanding their serious mistakes, that their heavenly Father continues to will their good and to hope that they will ultimately open themselves to the good." (FS, 27).

In Christ's love and service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gerald L. Vincke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Most Rev. Gerald L. Vincke

Bishop of Salina