

- Today is the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi.
 - I had an uncle who was an elderly Franciscan in Canada.
 - One night he was brutally attacked in downtown Montreal by 3 men.
 - Perhaps they were on drugs. Perhaps they just decided to beat up a priest,
 - But He was able to identify one of the men, as did a witness.
 - The police arrested the man. Shortly afterwards he was freed on bail.
 - A local man came to visit him and told him how bad he and others felt
 - He asked him if he knew who the man was
 - A bunch of the fellows wanted to take care of the situation themselves.
 - Father knew where the man lived, but he kept it to himself
 - He was a Franciscan – St. Francis' is the saint of peace.
 - His prayer is: "Make me an instrument of your peace." That was my uncle.
- Violence begets violence, but love begets love.
- Today's Gospel speaks about love - love of a man & woman united in marriage.
 - The problem with love & violence is they can both be part of marriage, but shouldn't be.
 - When we look at a married couple *we should see a reflection of God's love*
 - Single people & children should look and see:
 - God's faithfulness in the faithfulness of married couple
 - God's presence in good times and bad times – in their presence in . . .
 - God's presence in good health and bad health – in their presence . . .
 - Marriage is a reflection of God's relationship with us.
- Marriage is holy, sacred. It is the one gift given by God before the fall which wasn't taken away by man's sin.
 - ***Marriage demands sacrificial love***
 - Young people hoping to marry may have ideals of a wonderful home, a loving spouse, and butterflies in the stomach every time they see their husband and wife.
 - Those of you who are married would tell them that sometimes the butterflies are Dr. Flies
 - Husbands & wives need to pray together to be united to Jesus, the bond of their marriage.
 - I once heard a man say that before he leaves for work every day, while his wife is still sleeping, he says a prayer over her, asking Jesus to care for his love.
 - Teens, listen - if you ever find anyone willing to do this, that's the person you marry.
- Love can conquer all.
 - The couple whose marriage is going through a difficult period
 - The teen who wants to remain wholesome and moral
 - The many who are crying out in pain and suffering
 - ALL can defeat the violence of the world with the Love of the Lord.
 - **Here's why - 2nd Reading** says, "He who consecrates, and the ones who are consecrated, all have the same origin. Therefore, He is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters."
 - ***We are made in the image and likeness of God.***
 - We can be better than the violent world around us.
 - We can be better than the worst inclinations within us.
 - & we can be better because Jesus makes us better.
- I do not know if I can be like my uncle and be a man of peace when I am confronted with violence.
 - The Power to do this is within me though because Jesus is there.
 - And you have it in you to be people of peace in the face of violence because Jesus is there.
 - If I want my Diaconate to be what it can be – my Marriage to be what it can be
 - If you want your marriages to be all they can be
 - If you would someday like to enter into a marriage that is full of love
 - If we want our Christianity to be real, true, sincere, then we must allow the One who is within us to make us instruments of His peace.
- St. Francis lived 900 – 1000 years ago and Jesus walked the earth 900 – 1000 years before him.
 - The message of the Lord was relevant to Francis of Assisi and it is still relevant to us.
 - We can be better than the world around us.

- We do not have to give in to violence and the many ways it is expressed.
- We can be people of deep and lasting peace - ***We can be Christians.***