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*Statement from the Most Rev. Lawrence T. Persico, Bishop of Erie  
concerning Fiducia Supplicans*

I learned about the new papal document, *Fiducia Supplicans* (Supplicating Trust), at the same time as the public. Having reviewed it, I'd like to summarize and comment on some key points in an effort to help people understand it.

Let me begin with what the document does not say.

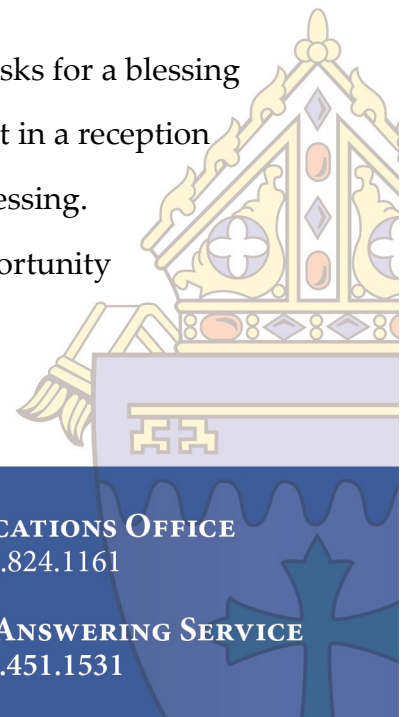
It does not condone same-sex marriage. In fact, it emphasizes that the teaching of the church has not changed: Marriage, as understood by the church, is the union of one man and one woman.

*Fiducia Supplicans* simply says that anyone who spontaneously asks for a blessing may receive it. People ask me for blessings all the time, sometimes right in a reception line. I do not stop to quiz them about their lives before I give them a blessing. They are expressing a desire to be close to God and that creates an opportunity

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for me to help them experience God's love and mercy.

In a situation like this, I am blessing the individuals, not their situation. I am imparting God's grace to them through a blessing.

The document addresses not only blessings being given to same-sex couples, but also to couples who may be in what we call an irregular marriage, one in which, for example, someone has not had an annulment before remarrying.

The document clarifies this is to be a spontaneous blessing, not a sacrament, not a liturgical blessing. It is not to be ritualized. It is not to be done with liturgical garments or tied in any context to a sacramental or civil wedding. I would be blessing the individuals, not offering a ritualized or formal liturgical blessing of their relationship.

We are developing a plan to assist our priests, so they understand the nature of a spontaneous blessing. We all need God's blessing, no matter where we are in our spiritual journey. The document does provide some clarification, but again, it does not change the church's teaching on marriage.

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Link to English translation of *Fiducia Supplicans*:

[https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_dcf\\_doc\\_20231218\\_fiducia-supplicans\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_dcf_doc_20231218_fiducia-supplicans_en.html)