

Homily ~OT XXVII [B], (October 6, 2024)

Today, let us reflect on a profound and sacred topic: the bond of love in marriage, as intended by God. Our readings remind us that marriage is not merely a social contract, but a divine covenant - a commitment that mirrors God's unwavering fidelity to us. In our world today, where the sanctity of marriage is often challenged, we are called to uphold and celebrate this sacred institution. Let us ask ourselves a few questions about this institution of marriage.

What is the Plan of God for Marriage? Our first reading from Genesis reveals God's original design for marriage. In creating man and woman, God established a partnership rooted in love and unity. The profound truth expressed here is that in marriage, two become one. This union is not just physical; it is spiritual and emotional, a bond designed to reflect God's eternal love for humanity. As we contemplate the words "they shall become one flesh," we understand that marriage is a journey of deep sharing and commitment. This union is meant to be exclusive and lifelong, as indicated by God's intention for monogamy from the very beginning. This teaches us that fidelity in marriage is not only a commitment to one another but also a response to God's faithfulness.

What is the blessing of a family? The Responsorial Psalm echoes this theme, celebrating the blessings that come from this union, particularly the gift of children. The Psalmist prays, "May you see your children's children." This beautifully illustrates how marriage is not just about the couple, but also about the family that springs forth from their love - a family that enriches both their lives and the community.

What is the role of Christ in a family? In our second reading from Hebrews, we are reminded of the profound mystery of Christ's incarnation. Jesus, who became one of us, invites us into a family that transcends earthly ties. Through His sacrifice, He bridges the gap between God and humanity, offering redemption to all. This brings us to a critical point: while the teachings of Christ on marriage, particularly His prohibition of divorce, can be challenging, they come from a place of deep love. They call us to reflect on the pain that can arise from broken relationships and urge us to embrace the suffering we encounter as part of our journey to glory.

What is the teaching of Christ on Marriage? The Gospel of Mark confronts us with Jesus' clear teaching on marriage and divorce. He emphasizes the sanctity of family life. He affirms the unity and the indissolubility of marriage. These teachings are countercultural today, where cohabitation and divorce are increasingly common. Yet, we are called to uphold the sanctity of marriage not just for its own sake, but for the well-being of society as a whole. When families are strong, communities thrive.

Let us have the call to work on marriage: Marriage is not a passive state; it demands active participation from both spouses. It requires becoming the right persons for one another, rooted in love that is forgiving, generous, and sacrificial. Couples are invited to engage in open communication, shared prayer, and a commitment to nurturing their children in faith. Regular participation in the Eucharist strengthens their bond and provides grace for the challenges they face. A regular date night is not bad idea either.

As we reflect on the sacredness of marriage today, let us renew our commitment to honor our own marriages and support others in theirs. May we recognize that marriage is a vocation, a path to holiness, and a means through which God's love is made manifest in the world. Let us pray for the strength to uphold the beauty of marriage and the wisdom to reach out to those in need.

Let me conclude with this short story:

It was a busy morning around 8:30 when an elderly man in his eighties arrived at the clinic to have stitches removed from his thumb. He mentioned to the nurse that he was in a hurry because he had an appointment at 9:00 AM.

Curious, the nurse asked if he had another doctor's appointment. The man explained that he needed to go to the nursing home to have breakfast with his wife. He shared that she had been living in the nursing home for some time and had Alzheimer's disease.

When the nurse asked if his wife would be upset if he arrived a bit late, he replied gently, "She hasn't recognized me for the last five years." Surprised, the nurse wondered why he was in such a hurry then.

With a warm smile, he said, "She doesn't know me, but I still know who she is." The nurse held back tears as he left, thinking, "That is the kind of love I hope to have in my life."

Try to have it in your life also.