

HOMILY ~ 27th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME OCTOBER 5/6, 2024

We find out today that controversy about divorce is not a new thing, and that the permanency of marriage is even older. When Jesus walked the world 2000 years ago, divorce was commonplace. It took little for a man to divorce his wife. He only had to find a fault with his wife; and the potential faults ranged in severity from adultery, through not cooking what he liked, being aggressive which was defined as speaking loud enough to be heard next door, and, to my amazement, the most ridiculous fault of not being the prettiest girl he looked at. Yes, a man could legally divorce his wife if he saw someone he desired more. In return, a wife could only divorce a man in severe conditions like adultery or if he got a disreputable job like becoming a tanner. Tanning in those days meant spending your working day washing animal skins in urine and excrement. Men were coming up with any and every reason for divorce just to enable them to indulge their lustful hearts. Women and children were treated like possessions.

How far was this from the picture described in our Genesis Reading? In Genesis, we are told that man and woman are made for each other. Woman is made from Adam's flesh and bone, made from Adam's rib. The word rib in Hebrew is Tsēlā, which could also mean side or a quarter of the heavens or a part or division. The story we hear in Genesis is poetic, rather than a scientific report or newspaper story. It teaches us that men and women are created from the same stuff, designed to be together, both physically and emotionally. Adam was pleased he had a friend, a companion and ally. Someone he could spend his life with, someone who was so much like him that when they came together, they became one. That should be our model for marriage, the coming together of a man and woman, the making of one out of two, creating something new, something better, something stronger. But you do not have to give up yourself in marriage, marriage is about adding your hopes and dreams together. The married couple face life together, stand as one, support, love and challenge each other.

Marriage for me is wonderful. I love my wife, Gail, and very much believe she completes me. I am a much better person with her, than I was before we met. We, like all couples, disagree sometimes; we both get a little selfish, but it never lasts long. I cannot imagine life without her now. Marriage is special; it is part of God's plan. It must not be entered into lightly, there should not be clauses about jobs, cooking, shouting or wanting someone else to let you out of a marriage. Marriage is for life; it is for the completeness of us.

I know divorce happens in our world. I have seen the pain and suffering caused as marriages break down. I do not like it; I do not really understand it. Sometimes the couple never really committed to each other, they never really became one. Sometimes there is a betrayal by one person against the other. We are broken people, we sin, we make mistakes; and when that brokenness and those mistakes break a marriage, it is horrible. God's rules for marriage are not meant to restrict us. They are there for our good. In marriage, a man and woman come together and they become one. They promise each other and God that they will remain as one. If you are married or are intending to get married, I pray that your marriage is happy and prosperous, and you keep your family in the heart of your home.

Peace,

Deacon Don