

**Homily - Mk. 10: 2-16**  
**27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B**  
**03<sup>rd</sup> October 2021**

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A few years ago, there was a man whose wife became seriously ill with Alzheimer's disease. She completely lost all of her memory and her ability to remember who she was or who anyone else was. She was in a nursing home and her husband came by, to sit beside her and be near her every day. One day, one of his sons told him: "Dad, you don't need to keep doing that. Mom doesn't remember who she is and she doesn't remember who you are". The man looked at his son gently and then said: "Son, I know she doesn't remember anything, but I do. I remember who she is and I remember who I am. I am the husband who told her 55 years ago, 'I will love and cherish you forever, for better or worse and in sickness and health.' And I intend to do just that."

The Scripture Readings of today highlight God's plan for marriage and family life. They reveal God's intention of how love is to be experienced and expressed in our world. And they tell us the ideal way in which human beings can learn God's plan for love over a life time.

Coming to the Gospel, the Pharisees were actually setting a trap for Jesus. But, instead of falling into the

trap, Jesus goes to the heart of the matter as he always does. He describes what God has intended from the beginning: ‘that human love is to last forever’. At the same time, Jesus is also gentle with those who are not perfect. Although he presented a vision for human relationships, he never condemned those who fell short of that vision.

Michael Hargrove tells about a scene at an airport that literally changed his life. He was picking up a friend. He then noticed a man coming toward him carrying two light bags. The man stopped right next to Hargrove to greet his family. The man motioned to his youngest son (maybe six years old) as he laid down his bags. They hugged and Hargrove heard the father say, “It’s so good to see you, son. I missed you so much!” “Me, too, Dad!” said the son. The oldest son (maybe nine or ten) was next. “You’re already quite the young man. I love you very much, Zach!” Then he turned to their little girl (perhaps one or one-and-a-half). He kissed her and held her close. He then handed his daughter to his oldest son and declared, “I’ve saved the best for last!” and now proceeded to give his wife a long, passionate kiss. “I love you so much!” He said to his wife softly. Hargrove interrupted this idyllic scene to ask, “Wow! How long have you two been married?” “Been together fourteen years total, married twelve of those,” the man replied,

as he gazed into his wife's face. "Well then, how long have you been away?" The man turned around and said, "Two whole days!" Hargrove was stunned and then he quietly said. "I hope my marriage is still that passionate after twelve years!" The man stopped smiling and told Hargrove, "Don't hope, my dear friend . . . just decide!"

Well, at the heart of Jesus' teaching, we find two dimensions of marriage. And they are: Unity and Permanence. In Mark 10: 7-8 Jesus says: "A man shall leave his father and mother, and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh" and in verse 9 he would say: "What God has united, human beings must not divide". Yes! Jesus' vision of marriage is of a profound union between a man and a woman, a communion of faithful love.

In a nutshell, the Gospel of today gives Christ's explicit teaching on marriage and divorce, the Divine origin of marriage, the sacredness of family life, and the indissolubility of marriage. And it teaches us clearly that family life is sacred, that husband and wife are partners with equal rights and that the destruction of the family by divorce will produce the destruction of society.

Once a seeker approached a scholar and asked him: "Could you tell me: Is there anything more beautiful in

life than a boy and a girl clasping clean hands and pure hearts in the path of marriage? Can there be any thing more beautiful than young love?” The scholar gazed at him and then said: “Yes, there is a more beautiful thing. It is the spectacle of an old man and an old woman finishing their journey together on that path. Their hands are gnarled, but still clasped; their faces are seamed but still radiant; their hearts are physically bowed and tired, but still strong with love and devotion for each other. Yes, there is a more beautiful thing than young love. Old love.”

Well, Marriage is a life time journey of living and loving. It is the journey from youthful dancing at the beginning, to later years marked by weakness, physical weakness; a journey that leads from holding hands as an expression of passion, to holding hands so that you can get up the hill together; a journey that leads from embracing each other as a sign of holy intimacy, to standing behind your beloved ready to catch them or hold them if they fall. And as time goes on, love evolves and it deepens and it changes. Love looks one way when you are younger. It looks yet another when you get older.

And if love is going to last a life time, our love has to grow, evolve, deepen and meet new challenges. Faithful

couples learn how to do that in the long haul. And every Christian must learn it in our life time relationship with Jesus. And in our weakest moments, we need to know that Jesus is standing behind us with strong arms, ready to catch us, ready to hold us when we fall.

No matter how youthful or aged we may be, our vocation from the Lord is the same: Love one another faithfully, creatively and constantly. And everyday, look at Jesus: He has all that we need and all that would make us whole. Let him love us. And, let's Love Him in return, and love one another. And as you will be coming forward to receive Him at Communion today, you will consume Him. And the Eucharist being consumed, our relationship with Christ is consummated where you and Jesus, the two of you, become one flesh.

God bless you all, **Amen.**