



Contributed by Fr. Ray Reitzel, C.R.

Born in Waterloo and is #9 in a family of 9 boys and 3 girls. One brother (Harry) is a C.R. priest, and two sisters are Notre Dame Sisters. He taught for 31 years at St. Jerome's H.S, Kitchener, and at St. Joseph- Scollard Hall in North Bay. He served in 4 parishes for 17 years. He is now semi-retired and living at Resurrection Manor, Waterloo, a residence for retired CRs.

27th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
October 3, 2021 Year 'B'

GATHERING TIME (10-15 minutes)

Introduction to the Word:

In Mark's gospel today, Jesus teaches, **"What God has joined together, let no one separate."**

So, the main topic today will be on **Marriage**, Divorce, Annulment.

Marriage begins with love, delight, joy, great expectations...I always love Jesus' image:

"The kingdom of Heaven is like a wedding feast."

Usually, the bride and groom are in their prime on their wedding day: she is dressed in her attractive wedding gown, the groom in his tuxedo; attracted to each other in love and excitement, with a priest or Minister "tying the knot" with the profession of their marriage vows, for a life commitment; and exchanging of two rings. This is followed by: music and dancing; some fine speeches about their personal attributes and incidents in their lives; expressing this scenario, publicly before their friends, family and relatives.

At the wedding feast in Cana, in the midst of this festivity, Mary, the mother of Jesus became aware (to the embarrassment of this newly married couple) that "they have run out of wine!" Mary's **last words** in the Bible, to them, and to us, are, "Do whatever Jesus tells you to do!" At the request of his mother, Jesus works His **first public miracle**, turning water into wine.

❖ **This marriage joy is expressed** in many Bible texts:

Sirach 26:13a,15b,16 A wife's charm delights her husband, ...
and no scales can weigh the value of her chastity.

Like the sun rising in the heights of the Lord,
so is the beauty of a good wife in her well-ordered home.

Ephesians 5:25-30: Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy, by cleansing her with the washing of water by the Word, so as to present the church to himself in splendour, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body.

1 Corinthians 12: 31—13:8

“But strive for the greater gifts. ... Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. ...All other things will cease... will come to an end.”

- ❖ However, besides joy in marriage and family life, there **will be times of turmoil**, sadness, neglect, ...

Look at the **Holy Family**: Jesus is born in a stable; they became refugees into Egypt, escaping the sword of Herod; Jesus is ‘lost’ in the temple; the Seven Sorrows of Mary....

- ❖ In any generation we have so many competing values and attitudes in society, which bring stress to relationships, and can undermine friendships and marriage.

Marriages that endure, we know, are not without trials and tribulations, providing many challenging opportunities for couples to place their trust in each other, and in God. This can seem, at times, impossible. Marriages that do not endure, we also know, generate their own particular pains and sufferings, which may make our trust in God even more difficult in the experience of broken trust with another. This also can seem to be impossible. But, at these moments when the cross is present, we stand in hope of the resurrection, and in the hope that God can make *all things* new. Remember the scripture text: “Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven, and everything else will be added unto you.”

Warm-up Activity: *(about 8-10 minutes):*

(To get into the spirit of today’s readings, you are invited to address one or more of the following questions.)

- In your parish or local community, are there married couples you admire and why?
- Who in your family has had the longest married life together?
- To what would they attribute their lasting relationship?

Penitential Rite:

Leader: As we enter the riches and wisdom of God’s Word, let us recall the many times we faced our own “**mission impossible**”, and were tested in our **trust** in God, as a little child.

**Lord, from of old you have loved us,
From of old you have made us your own,
From of old you grant us pardon and peace,**

**Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord have mercy.**

Let us pray (together)
*Lord, You created the light to shine in the darkness, and drew the dry land from the water.
Lord, you are the Creator of all things, and you reconcile all of this creation to yourself.
Give us wisdom to deal with tensions creatively, and especially to affirm and respect
the differences between one another as sacred territory.
For this we pray in Jesus' name.
Amen.*

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION TIME (45 minutes)

FIRST READING (Genesis 2:7ab, 15, 18–24)

The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.” So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner.

So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken.” Therefore, a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING (Hebrews 2:9–11)

We see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor, because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.¹⁰ In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. ¹¹ Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. ^[a]

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL (Mark 10:2–16)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Some Pharisees came, and to test Jesus they asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” Jesus answered them, “What did Moses command you?” They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her.”

But Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.” Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. Jesus said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.” People were bringing little children to him in order that Jesus might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus

saw this, he was indignant and said to them. “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them: for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.” And Jesus took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

(Pause for a brief reflection on the scripture readings)

Lectio Divina means “sacred prayer.” It was a popular form of prayer in the early Church. This Word proclaimed today is God’s own Word, God’s way of speaking to you today through his own Spirit. So take a few moments to be quiet, allowing this Word you have just heard to touch you as you reflect quietly on the three readings. Is there a word or thought that somehow attracts you or has your interest? If so, simply identify it and describe it in a few words.

COMMENTARY:

Our first reading from the **Book of Genesis** gives us the story of the creation of the world, and the creation of Adam and Eve. Remember: Genesis does not intend to teach us HOW God created the world. It teaches us that **God is responsible** for the creation of the world. It is the **job of science** to search HOW the world was created.

Adam is created from the dust of the earth. And God later says, ““It is not good that man should be alone!”...

In Hebrews 2:5-9 the author gives proof to show that Christ is superior to the angels, namely, because He is to be Lord of the world to come, that is, of the Messianic Kingdom. For a brief space of time on earth Christ humbled Himself in His sufferings even below the angels, but this was only that He might triumph in the end as Lord of all.

He became incarnate and suffered, thus for a time, becoming lower than the angels. It was all for our sake and our salvation. **Sorrow, sufferings, and death in our fallen state, are necessary conditions of human life (also in marriage and the family);** and He who was to be the Saviour of all people, must share their nature and sad experiences, in order that He might overcome the power of death, the instrument of Satan. Then He who was sinless Himself might satisfy for the sins of mankind and rescue those who are tempted and sorely tried.

We are told the reason for our Lord’s humiliation in His Incarnation, earthly life, passion, sufferings, and death. He thus was made a little lower than the angels, in order that by “the grace of God,” i.e., as a gratuitous gift of God, He might merit His own exaltation as man and our salvation. It was commendable, though not necessary, that God (who is the final, as well as the efficient cause of all things), when bringing all to salvation, should will that Christ, the Saviour of all, should share in their common lot of suffering. God could have chosen other means of saving the world, but for His own wise reasons He **has made the way of suffering the royal road to glory.**

In the Gospel of Mark today, Jesus said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her... In Matthew’s Gospel (19:1...) the Apostles find this impossible to do. And Jesus said, “With God, all things are possible.” Matthew also adds, “Any man who divorces his wife for any cause, unless it is because of ‘unfaithfulness,’ commits adultery if he marries another.” The word “unfaithfulness” is translated from the Greek word *porneia*, which has many different, difficult, translations. This word has been often discussed in many books, and at different Synods of Bishops. We often hear a quotation of Pope Francis, “**Who am I to judge?**”

If we look at his full statement, he said, “For one who is searching for God in their lives, who am I to judge?” A whole different meaning.

A sacramental, valid, marriage is a marriage involving 1 or 2 Catholics, done by a priest or Deacon; or between 2 Christians done by a Minister. It is sacramental when both have been baptized. Marriage between 2 non-Christians is still a valid marriage. But, if a Catholic is married outside the Church, without the proper dispensation, it is not a sacramental marriage. An **annulment** is a statement that there was no ‘valid’ marriage in the first place. A legitimate cause for annulments is decided by the Marriage Tribunal in the Diocese.

While trying to value commitment in marriage (and also in religious life), Jesus is also reaching out to people who are in difficult, personal situations. We follow Him in this, letting go of judgements about people and about their relationships. We never know what people are going through, unless we have walked in their shoes and in their footsteps. In any situation where there are big differences in people’s attitudes, especially in the family, the encouragement is to keep doors of communication open. In the long term, this is the way towards greater love and healing, and allowing Jesus to be part of every aspect of life. Many parents have been happy in later years that they kept lines of communication open with children, whose lifestyles may have been different from theirs.

(Allow about 5 – 10 minutes for the participants to respond to the commentary)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. (Genesis: 2:23). “*This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.*” This statement underlines the *equality* as well as the *complementary nature* of man and woman—while equal in every measure, together they become *one*. In a couple’s oneness in love, they share, potentially, in the oneness of God’s own consuming love.
 - a. From an old movie... “love means never having to say you’re sorry”. What are your reactions and comments?
 - b. In regard to the equality of women and men, your group members are invited to share your feelings and thoughts. In what ways do you think women in today’s world are not perceived or respected as “equal partners” with men?
2. (Hebrews 2:11) “*For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified, all have the same Father.*” If we all have the same Father, then we are all brothers and sisters of Christ.
 - a. What experiences have you had, that you think embody this statement?
 - b. What do you think is at the root of experiences where people do not hold this view paramount?
3. (Mark) “*From the beginning of creation...*” The scriptures in their references to creation (see also Ps.24:1; Dt. 10:14; Lev.25:23) indicate the attitude in which the **environment** ought to be regarded.
 - a. Try to identify and then talk briefly of some of the current world-wide problems that have their origin, at least in part, in a failure to appreciate and value the grandeur of God’s creation.

CARING-PRAYING TIME: (15-20 minutes)

1. **Word for the Week:** We are called to trust God, like a little child! “Unless you become like a little child...”

2. **Suggestions for the Week:** “At each new stage of married life, there is a need to sit down and renegotiate agreements, so that there will be no winners and no losers.” (*The Joy of Love*)

3. **Intercessions:** (Response: **Lord, hear our prayer**)

For a responsible stewardship of God’s good earth and its fragile resources:

May we dwell in harmony with the birds of the air, and beasts of the field, we pray...

For all who are overburdened by loneliness or scarred by rejection:

May they know the joy of loving and forgiving others, and of being loved in return, we pray...

For those who have experienced the pain of a “failed” marriage, leading to a sense of alienation from self, others, God, and the Church. We pray...

For the married couples and their families in our community: May God help them to persevere in their one covenant of love, we pray...

For the dead, those departed ones who put their faith in Jesus: May they be crowned with glory and honour, and partake of the heavenly feast. We pray...

For the Pope, that he may be blessed with good health, strength and wisdom to clean up the scandals in the church, we pray...

How can we help you in prayer this week?

Let us pray (together)

*In your image you have made us, O God, male and female.
You have made us, knowing that it is not good for us to be alone.
Penetrate our hard hearts that we may bind ourselves to one another,
fulfilling the splendour of your vision for us. We ask this through Jesus,
who is not ashamed to call us his brothers and sisters,
who sympathizes with our weaknesses, and intercedes on our behalf,
and, who is one with You. and the Holy Spirit, God for ever. Amen.*

With hands and hearts united in gratitude for God’s favours on us today, we pray that all those in our influence, be moved to be open to your Word and your Spirit, while we pray united as one, OUR FATHER...

Celebrating the Word, Resurrection Ministries of the Congregation of the Resurrection Ontario-Kentucky Province (including the former Resurrection Centre), 265 Westmount Road North, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G7. (*Celebrating the Word* was founded by Father Frank Ruetz, C.R., deceased 2012). For information: **website:** www.resurrectionists.ca **E-mail:** provincialoffice@resurrectioncollege.ca The version used in this commentary is the **New Revised Standard Version** (copyrighted by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA).