

Homily 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time (7.10.18)

## Christian marriage

- in this, & all our relationships, we ask for God's blessing

In today's Mass readings, we have got some of the scriptural teaching on marriage. There aren't many references to marriage in sacred Scripture, so we don't usually have a reading on the subject at a Sunday Mass. The readings there, are about marriage - are usually only read at a marriage ceremony. However, when the lectionary was altered, the liturgical authorities decided to put these particular readings on this particular Sunday.

So once every three years we get these readings, which includes references to marriage. This was an appropriate thing to do since marriage is such an important concern for most of our people. Marriage can be described as a special bond between a man and a woman, freely entered into, to which they commit themselves to each other until death. They promise to give themselves to one another completely. As our Lord puts it, the two become one. And since it is intended to be a serious and enduring relationship, it should not be entered into lightly. Before a couple get married, they should have a great love and complete unselfishness towards each other. They must also be ready to give without counting the cost. Their union should include caring for each other, sharing with each other, and being fair towards each other.

When marriage takes place between Christians in an appropriate situation, such as a church, it is more than a bond. It is what we call a sacrament, something sacred and holy. That means that under the reception of the sacrament of matrimony, the partners in marriage receive special graces to help them in their married life. These graces are intended to help them to live happily together and to fulfill the duties and responsibilities they have as husband, wife, or parents. The graces themselves are no magic formula for a happy marriage. Those who are married have to respond to the graces offered to them, and they have to do their best to live in accordance with those graces.

So we see a Christian marriage as a union between two people through which they care for each other, they love each other, they are there for each other. It has to include an openness to each other, good communications between each other, and a real friendship between each other. How many times we hear a couple say,

"My husband or wife is my best friend."?

While we see that marriage can be such a wonderful institution, we know too that there are some marriages that do not live up to that ideal. There are many who in their marriages experience difficulties. Most people in such a situation will try to solve the difficulties. They will try to sort out their differences and get back on an even keel.

However, there are some for whom their marriage becomes a nightmare. Either one of the parties suffers a great deal, maybe because of infidelity or ill-treatment of the other party. There are some people who are in bereavement because they have lost their partner in marriage, or because of separation or divorce. It takes time for the party who is left to recover from such a tragedy. Healing takes time.

I suppose today in the secular world, there has been a great deal of change relating to marriage and to unions between not always a man and a woman anymore. So we hear of civic partnerships, we hear of same-sex marriages. For our purposes tonight, we are just concerning ourselves with the scriptural teaching of marriage, and also with the Canon Law on marriage. Whether or not we are married or single, whether we are parents or grandparents, whatever our state in life is, the important thing for us is to be close to the Lord, to turn to Him especially in prayer because with Jesus on our side, whatever our situation is, then things will work out for us. So, let us concentrate on doing what is right, doing what is good, no matter what our state in life is.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.