

Twenty-Seventh Sunday Ordinary Time -B -2018  
Gen.2.18-24///Heb.2.9-11///Mark 10.2-16

→two friends were sitting talking about their respective marriages....and by coincidence they were both getting ready to celebrate their upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

→one friend said to the other.... “what are you going to do for your 50<sup>th</sup>”

→and the other friend answered.... “well on our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary I took my wife to Australia...and so for the 50<sup>th</sup> I’m going back to get her!”

→comedians will often make a lot of jokes about marriage...and these days marriage and the idea of getting married is undergoing a radical transformation in our society and in the Church

→these days.... there seems to be a broad array of understandings, definitions, and meanings about marriage....

→to go along with a wide variety of social conventions and customs that have influenced and shaped our understanding of marriage both from a religious perspective as well as a social and cultural perspective

→but one thing that has remained constant through history and time is the foundational characteristic that marriage is an important and vital relationship to the well-being of human beings

→and today’s readings certainly validate and confirm that characteristic because

→our readings today deal with relationships, human relationships and the importance of them...as well as the fragileness of them in our lives

→and the one relationship that perhaps is most common...most often thought of....and most demanding is that of marriage....

→because the relationship shared in marriage is the most profound type of relationship we as human beings can engage in...that we can be part of.....

→and yet...as we are all well aware.....

---marriage today, and for that fact relationships in general and the permanence of them unfortunately isn't as automatic as it used to be

→too many people today...too many friends..... and too many relatives and family members struggle with the pain the broken promises, they allow lives to crumble, and many of us become like pawns in a chess game, for any of us to take marriage or any relationship for granted

→and it would be convenient to blame society and to say that with the way things are in this culture today...it's no surprise that marriage is in trouble.

→it would be even easier to blame each other and sit in judgment of people whose lives and decisions fall short of the mark

→and it would be **even easier still** to soften the teachings of Jesus [as the Pharisee's want to do in today's gospel] or to not even preach this message at all.

→after all, if marriage, or committed relationships, or any relationship for that matter, is so difficult to maintain...then maybe we would be better off if we just didn't worry about them or even have them

→but the reality is...that the God who loves you and me, the God who walked with Adam and walks with each of us...continues to call each of us into these covenant relationships

→in the profound act of naming the wild animals and the birds of the air, the creatures of the sea...Adam [as we hear today in the first reading] still felt an intense loneliness.

→in the midst of all that abundance, in the midst of paradise.....we find that Adam was still alone

→and it was then that Adam realized just how much God loved him and you and me...because a companion was created

→and it is THIS intense/profound LOVE that God shared with Adam and with us....that continues to invite us into relationships with one another

→because you see, it is through these relationships with each other that we begin to understand the depth of our relationship with God.

→like Adam, we have discovered that in the midst of our abundance....we still hunger for someone to share life with, to share ourselves with, someone to be with.....and if we are open to that hunger...that can also lead us to God.

---unfortunately however, today, the Pharisees in the gospel are more concerned with the legal issues of divorce that they failed to see the invitation and fruitfulness that lies behind each and every marriage

→they were so interested in testing the limits of the commandments that they forgot to see their blessings.

PAUSE

→the readings today are about relationships and the importance of them in our lives

→and today Jesus addresses the pain that results from broken relationships...a pain that I am sure all of us at some time or another has felt or experienced.

→and Jesus makes it clear that relationships...any relationship

---whether it be husband and wife, parents and children, best friends or us and God....are hard to maintain

---they are difficult to sustain

---they are consuming

---and they are challenging

----and yet the bottom line is that they are important....they are vital....and they are worth it...because without them our life is incomplete

→today, Jesus, in his words, challenges the Pharisees as well as you and me...to look at the hardness of our own hearts and to instead be open to and risk becoming one with each other

→today, Jesus invites you and me to see, in the promises we make to each other...a reflection of the promise God makes to us.

→[and] today, Jesus reveals to you and me to take seriously the relationships we have and work to make them meaningful and rewarding...so that we can see the love of God in our lives.

→I believe the point of the readings today is ...that relationships...deep--meaningful relationships are important and essential because without them...our life is incomplete

And so, even though we might make jokes...or call into question their relevance or meaning...

→ Any relationship we have, whether it be husband/wife...best friends...or with family or friends is necessary in order for us to realize what we actually have...God's love freely bestowed on each one of us

→ and today what Christ reminds us of is that no matter what happens, and no matter how difficult any relationship in our lives might become, ...don't give up on it so easily....don't walk away from it so quickly....don't eliminate it from your life so effortlessly

....because, in the end, when you think about it..... the one and only true thing we can depend on is each other.