

27th Ordinary Sunday
October 3, 2021
“Success in Marriage”

Gen 2:18-24
Heb 2:9-11
Mk 10:2-12

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord –

Without a doubt, marriage is probably the most daunting of all human relationships. It certainly is the most potentially challenging and complicated of human interactions. It requires the ability to communicate well in every aspect of our personhood: spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical.

It's such a great challenge because men and women are incomplete in themselves. They need someone of the opposite sex to help them become a fully developed human being. They need to discover things, look at things, and understand the world from the other gender's perspective. Above all, they need to overcome the basic selfishness and sin that are part of every one of us.

Unfortunately, today, there are forces in the world working to destroy the institution of marriage. This is the case, even though marriage was established by God with His creation of opposite, but complementary, sexes.

These destructive forces include those who insist that marriage can't be limited to a man and woman. Instead, they have passed laws that sanction the marriage of those of the same sex – of gays and lesbians.

However, they don't realize or understand that same sex marriages short-circuit full human development. They also do harm to the fabric of society. And this becomes most evident when we consider the children who often are adopted by same sex couples.

Every child needs to have both male and female parents for their normal development. They need to have modeled for them what it means to be a mother and a father – what it means to be female or male – as the case may be. Even the arms of women and men are designed differently. The woman's arms comfortably hold the child facing inward – While the man's arms most easily hold the child facing outward – looking at the world.

The scriptures for today teach us that traditional marriage – between a man and a woman – was always the plan of God. The Book of Genesis presents God as the Divine Craftsman who sees how incomplete and unfulfilled was the man – alone and by himself. In the story, God has the man name all the other creatures that He created. This is a sign that the man is superior to them and has power over them. Yet, none of them was worthy of a human partnership. Only the woman could fill this void – And the man gives her a name that makes her his equal!

Sad to say, marriages have been capable of possible dysfunction even from ancient times. Because men were stronger, selfish, and unable to grow in the relationship – they, sometimes, cast aside their wives – they divorced them. But Jesus clearly teaches, in St. Mark’s Gospel, that this was never in the plan of God. Divorce is always a sign of human failure on some level. Although, sometimes, it can’t be avoided and might be necessary in order to protect the other spouse and the children the couple might have.

Perhaps, the marriage was doomed for failure from the beginning. People often enter marriage for the wrong reasons. Often they are unprepared for what such a bond and commitment require. They can be immature and greatly underdeveloped – They can have serious psychological problems or pathologies – as well as addictions – They might have no intention to remain faithful to their spouse.

Of course, cases like these can be annulled by the Church – because there was no marital covenant possible from the beginning. One or both of the parties were incapable of entering the life-long, exclusive relationship that marriage requires.

Brothers and Sisters, no marriage is perfect. There are good and bad times, happy and sad times, ecstatic and heartbreaking times. No spouse is always perfect – and one should never set out to change the other. Instead, they must learn to respect the other as would the best of friends. Thus, as John L’Heureux once said: “A friend is someone who leaves you with all your freedom intact – but, who by what he thinks of you, obliges you to be fully what you are”! There is a Chinese proverb that also says: “A friend is someone who knows the song of your heart and who can sing it back to you when you have forgotten the words”! If every man and woman in a marriage would always remember that they must be the best of friends – marriages would seldom, if ever, fail!

So, let us pray, today, for all married couples everywhere that they may become all that God continually asks of them!

Amen.

October 3, 2021

Msgr. Russell G. Terra