



Bringing Home the Word

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time | January 14, 2018

Drawn Toward Christ

By Mary Katharine Deeley

When I started in campus ministry, I was fortunate to meet a wonderful priest who had worked with college students for many years. I watched him carefully on Sundays and at student gatherings, picking up valuable information about how to talk to students, conduct myself professionally, and bring out the best in others and in myself.

Over the years we worked together, I observed many campus ministers—all age ranges, lay and ordained—seeking him out for advice and counsel. I referred more than a few. I also enjoyed our

conversations and nearly always left our meetings with more wisdom than when I started.

I wonder what Andrew and the other disciples thought when John called Jesus “the Lamb of God.” Whatever it was, they must have seen in Jesus someone who could answer their questions or give them something they were lacking. Maybe they saw a person their teacher admired and decided to seek his wisdom for themselves.

Whatever it was, something compelled them to follow Jesus, and Jesus’ own invitation to “come and see” whetted their curiosity and desire even more.

Today we might call that the impulse of the Spirit, who draws us to Christ even when we’re not sure why. The challenge for us is to have the courage to follow Jesus, ask where he’s staying, and walk with him even if we can’t see where it will lead us.

Our desire to stay with the Lord is, in itself, our comfort and our joy. +

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A Word From Pope Francis

This is a lesson for each one of us....If we let ourselves be led by the Holy Spirit, if we are able to mortify our selfishness to make room for the Lord’s love and for his will, we will find peace, we will be builders of peace and will spread peace around us.

—Address to pilgrims in Bergamo, Italy,
June 3, 2013



Sunday Readings

1 Samuel 3:3b–10, 19

The LORD called to Samuel, who answered, “Here I am.”

1 Corinthians 6:13c–15a, 17–20

The body...is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body.

John 1:35–42

[Jesus said,] “You are Simon the son of John; you will be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter).

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

ONE QUESTION FOR REFLECTION

- Are you named after a saint or someone in particular?
- If so, how does that saint or person inspire you?



Becoming People of Sexual Integrity

By Jim and Susan Vogt

The U.S. statistics on premarital sex (81 to 95 percent), marital infidelity (15 to 80 percent, studies vary widely) and births to single mothers (40 percent) are open to interpretation. They might reflect a loss of morality or be manifestations of searching for how to live as sexual beings. These numbers and their interpretations can disturb Catholics, who have been taught that sex outside of marriage is wrong. A committed Christian can feel like an alien in a foreign land.

Is fidelity in marriage passé? Is chastity a virtue only for priests and vowed religious? In its fullest sense, chastity applies to everyone—not just those who take a vow of chastity—since it means using one's sexuality according to one's state in life.

The Church calls single people to chastity because human sexual expression carries with it the power of intimate union and of creating new life. It's nothing to take lightly. If a man and woman aren't committed to one another, the bond created by their sexual union isn't a total gift of self and is thus conditional.

How does a faithful Catholic stay faithful in a culture that seems to minimize or ignore the importance of keeping the sexual expression of love

within marriage? One approach is to rail against those who engage in sex outside of marriage. But that won't change the reality that there will always be those who can't connect the dots between sexual intercourse and marriage. We can't control another's behavior. We can only love the person.

Does the Church have a message for spouses who are trying to live with sexual integrity? Is it just a matter of not having sexual affairs? After years of working with engaged and married couples, we've learned that infidelity usually doesn't start with sex. It starts with not paying attention—or paying too much attention to someone or something else.

Infidelity may start as an innocent office friendship. It may be fueled by boredom with a spouse. Children naturally divert energy from marriages. But adultery also comes in nonhuman forms. The "mistress" might be excessive dedication to one's job. Technology becomes the "other woman" when a spouse spends hours on the Internet. It might not be pornography, but it's still taking the place of time with one's spouse.

Chastity in marriage isn't only about what a couple shouldn't do, but also about what they should do. *Theology of the Body* emphasizes that our God-given gift of sexuality requires a total giving of self to the other. This sacrificial love means keeping love alive through words and deeds: letting my husband have his way even if I think my way is better or giving up a favorite TV program because

my wife wants to talk. It also includes making time to nurture romance so that one's marriage doesn't drift toward substitute loves. Focusing on the positive qualities of your spouse builds the relationship. It may sound flip, but a compliment a day keeps divorce away.

If you're a parent of a teen or young adult, your concern may be the sexual mores of the younger generation. With premarital sex and cohabitation becoming normative, what's a parent to say? Not much. The time for sharing your values is before they reach the age for these choices. After that, you continue to model wholesome relationships, pray for them, celebrate with them if a relationship grows into a permanent commitment, and stand by to help pick up the pieces if it doesn't.

The bottom line? Are your human relationships, whether or not they involve sexual expression, life-giving and generous? What must you do to make them so? +

PRAYER

Lord, draw me close to your heart
that I may come to know and love
you more deeply.

From *Peaceful Meditations
for Every Day in Ordinary Time*,

Rev. Warren J. Savage
and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

January 15–20

Mon. Weekday:
1 Sm 15:16–23 / Mk 2:18–22

Tue. Weekday:
1 Sm 16:1–13 / Mk 2:23–28

Wed. St. Anthony:
1 Sm 17:32–33, 37, 40–51 / Mk 3:1–6

Thu. Weekday: 1 Sm 18:6–9; 19:1–7
/ Mk 3:7–12

Fri. Weekday: 1 Sm 24:3–21
/ Mk 3:13–19

Sat. Weekday: 2 Sm 1:1–4, 11–12,
19, 23–27 / Mk 3:20–21

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