

I. Homily – 27th Marriage¹

II. Follow the manual.

A. Diesel is cheaper than gas.

1. Recently I decided to try this out.
2. Fortunately, the diesel nozzle does not fit into a gasoline automobile.
3. Because of this little feature, of course, I was lucky. I may not be so lucky.
4. Of course, if I had just read the manual, I would have known not to put diesel into the car and I would not have been taken a chance on making a big mistake.

B. After all, the manual is put out according to the specifications set down by the manufacturer of the automobile and the manufacturer knows what is good for the car and what is not good for the car.

C. Now, it may be on-line, but there is still a manual that tells us all about our car.

1. There are certainly options which I can reasonably make for my car.
2. What kind of car wax I use.
3. Where I buy my gas. Whether I buy superunleaded or regular.
4. But there are some choices I am not free to make. I cannot put diesel in my car instead of gasoline if I want it to run.
5. No matter how independent minded I am.

D. My purpose is not to give a crude analogy, but it might help us to understand what our Lord is giving us in the scripture passages we have read today.

1. The challenge for a homilist is to speak about something really important while at the same time being as discrete as possible and sensitive to younger ears.

¹ Sources Christopher West, Pope Benedict, Pope John Paul II.

2. So, wish me well as I attempt to speak to you about something really important while being sensitive to sensitive ears.

III. Today, in our scripture passages, our maker is telling us what makes us tick.

A. He is telling us how we are made.

B. And...he is telling us what makes us work best...what gives us life and joy.

C. This may be expressed succinctly in the phrase from our Lord: "Love one another as I have loved you."

D. But he is going a step further than even just telling us how we are made...he is telling us that our ultimate joy is union with him.

1. What does he place at the very center of the mystery of this union between God and his people?

2. The mystery of the love of a husband and wife.

3. Let's be clear here.

- a) *He is speaking certainly about their communion of life. The love and concern they show for one another.*

- b) *But, more specifically, he is referring to the most intimate act that a husband and wife share with one another.*

4. Just as the intimate union of the three persons of the Holy Trinity produced humanity.

5. So, does the intimate union of husband and wife bring new life into the world.

6. Considering that this is actually what the Church teaches about human intimacy, it is a bit astounding that the common wisdom today is that the Church teaches there is something dirty about it.

7. The reality is that what the Church teaches is that the love of a husband and wife is so beautiful and sacred that it must be protected and we need to follow the guidelines written in our hearts by the maker.

E. So, what's the problem?

1. The problem is that what God has made to emulate the depth of his love for us has a little crack in it.
2. The crack is Original Sin.
 - a) *God created men and women with an immortal soul which is not only a spark but a bonfire of his eternal life within them.*
 - b) *Ever since the first time that human beings sinned, that eternal bonfire has had a pale of water thrown on it.*
 - c) *Ever since human beings started being selfish and prideful, there was the potential for these sins to enter into the most beautiful act of intimacy God has given humanity.*
3. This can be seen very clearly in infidelity and other sins against this act of intimacy. It can be seen in less acute ways with demeaning comments toward women or against the act of intimacy itself. It can be seen in using intimacy for one's personal gratification instead of profound self-giving to the other. It can be seen in this act of intimacy outside of the protection of the Sacrament of Marriage and the vows uttered before God in Church.

F. What Christ did when he came to redeem us was to restore our relationship with him and restore the relationship between human beings.

1. In special way, he redeemed the relationship between husbands and wives.
2. He came to make the relationship between husband and wife a means to eternal life...a sacrament.
3. He came to restore the real meaning of this intimacy which is union in His love.
4. The way we restore the glory of this intimacy is by seeking reconciliation when it has been harmed...reconciliation in the sacrament meant for that purpose.

IV. What does that "I do" mean?

- A. Marriage is not whatever two people want to make it.
- B. Marriage is what the creator has created it to be.

C. This is the Church's official definition of marriage and I think you will find it quite beautiful:

D. "Marriage is the intimate, exclusive, indissoluble communion of life and love entered by a man and a woman at the design of the Creator for the purposes of their own good and the procreation and education of children; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised to the dignity of a sacrament."

- 1. Intimate communion of life and love: Marriage is the closest and most intimate of human friendships. The husband and wife share their entire lives and entire selves with the other.**
- 2. Exclusive: a husband and wife cannot have any such union with anyone else.**
- 3. Indissoluble: Love is not an emotion. It is a virtue. The union of a husband and wife is not the union simply of their feelings. It is the union of their whole persons by God through the consent they exchange on their wedding day before the Church's minister. Because it is placed there by God and the husband and wife are his instruments, this bond cannot be broken.**
- 4. Entered by a man and a woman: once again, the complementarity of male and female is written in our very persons.**
- 5. At the design of the creator: God is the one who has given these spouses the gift of life and love they share. He is the one who unites them in this bond. Therefore, he has also written in our hearts and in His Church certain laws to guide and protect this beautiful gift.**
- 6. For the purposes of their own good: Their communion of life and love helps them through this life, but ultimately with the purpose of getting each other to the next life.**
- 7. And the procreation and education of children: Since this bond emulates the creative love of God, it is also intended to flow over into new life. Each act of intimacy between husband and wife must be open to the possibility of this new life.**
- 8. Covenant: This is not a contract. It is an agreement with God of mutual and complete self-giving to the other.**
- 9. To the dignity of a sacrament: by virtue of their baptism, Marriage itself becomes a means of salvation for husband and wife.**

V. Conclusion

A. There are a lot of matters requiring our attention when we are trying to run a family and it is easy to reduce marriage to its simple functions:

- 1. The things husbands and wives do as they co-exist in their lives with one another.**
- 2. The jobs they work.**
- 3. The things they do for their children.**
- 4. The way they communicate.**
- 5. The way they balance the budget.**
- 6. The preparations for the house.**
- 7. These are all incredibly important and cannot be ignored.**

B. It can be easy to forget that the relationship of husbands and wives are not only the part of the Divine Plan...not only the way that God made it...but it is the very core mystery of our faith.

C. This mystery is lived out by recognizing that it is the core of the mystery of Christ's self-giving to His Church, understanding how His Grace is at work in your lives and then practicing that same self-giving to one's spouse.

D. It is also easy to write off the teaching of the teaching of the Church about marriage, because we have never really taken the time to discover it. If you are wondering what the Church really teaches, search out the theology of the body on the web and you might be amazed. Take the time to find out what the instruction manual says.