Homily Outline

Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time

Year B

This homily reflection focuses on the spousal nature of the sacrament of marriage. It delves into some of the history of marriage becoming a sacrament and the relationship with Christ within a marriage. Taken together, this Sunday's readings are foundational for married couples as they focus on the roles of husband and wife and how each should be "subordinate to one another out of reverence for Christ." St. Paul's epistle can be particularly shocking to modern ears or those beginning their faith journey as a married or newly married couple, so we encourage you to handle explanations with charity while speaking the truth.

This outline is intended to be a resource for reflection and prayer on how these themes and topics speak to your parishioners. We encourage you to take this resource to prayer and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance and inspiration. Finally, depending on where you are in the Ministry Engagement Ladder, be sure to invite everyone to participate in your upcoming experiences to enrich their marriage and family.

Sunday Readings:

- Jos 24:1-2a,15-1,18b; Ps 34:2-3, 16-17, 18-19, 20-21; Eph 5:21-32 or 5:2a, 25-32
- Gospel Passage (Jn 6:60-69): Many of Jesus' disciples who were listening said, "This saying is hard; who can accept it?" Since Jesus knew that his disciples were murmuring about this, he said to them, "Does this shock you? What if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail. The words I have spoken to you are Spirit and Life. But there are some of you who do not believe." Jesus knew from the beginning the ones who would not believe and the one who would betray him. And he said, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by my Father." As a result of this, many of his disciples returned to their former way of life and no longer accompanied him. Jesus then said to the Twelve, "Do you also want to leave?" Simon Peter answered him, "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God."

Points for Reflection:

- Church is the Bride of Christ:
  - CCC 796 "The unity of Christ and the Church, head and members of one Body, also implies the distinction of the two within a personal relationship. This aspect is often expressed by the image of bridegroom and bride. The theme of Christ as the Bridegroom of the Church was prepared for by the prophets and announced by John the Baptist. The Lord referred to himself as the bridegroom. The Apostle speaks of the whole Church, and of each of the faithful, as members of his Body, as a bride "betrothed" to Christ the Lord to become but one spirit with him. The Church is the spotless bride of the spotless Lamb."
  - How often do you think your duties/vows in marriage apply even more importantly to your relationship with Christ?
  - By virtue of the reception of the sacrament of Baptism, you enter this covenant relationship.
  - Good meditation exercise: re-read the second reading and put yourself in the wife role and Christ in the husband role. Think about how you live up to your "marriage" vows to Christ.

- Becoming one spirit with Christ: What does this mean?
    - Eternity in Heaven
    - Utter Joy
    - Love beyond our imagination
    - Hearing the Father say "You have done well, my good and faithful servant."

- Marriage in the Lord
    - The wedding feast at Cana as confirmation of the goodness of marriage and the proclamation that marriage will henceforth be an efficacious sign of Christ's presence. (CCC 1613).
    - Indissolubility of marriage (CCC 1614-1615)
        - Divorce was given permission in the Old Testament and was a concession to the hardness of the hearts of God's people, the Israelites.
        - Christ reaffirmed the indissolubility of marriage as God's original design for man and woman
        - "This saying is hard; who can accept it?"
            - Many of Christ's teachings pose a challenge to our weakened state due to sin, however, we are called to be holy as Christ is holy.
    - How a husband treats his wife:
        - The husband should cherish his wife as Christ cherishes his Church/people.
    - How a wife treats her husband:
        - Wives' subordination to husbands is important, however not meant to allow husbands to abuse them and not have proper relations between them.
    - Both spouses implored to subordinate to one another!
        - The man is the head, the woman is the body,
        - However, the body still signals to the brain important messages about how to maintain health. So also should a husband and wife head one another when speaking truth into their marriage keeping communication open, honest, and vulnerable.
            - Consider including a relationship skills exercise from Communio's Enrichment Concepts catalog as an insert in your bulletin as parishioners leave Mass. Encourage couples to complete it together at home during your homily.
    - The necessity of Christ to have a joy-filled marriage:
        - Prayer is the bedrock of bringing Christ into marriage
            - Prayer is needed together as a couple as well as individually
            - Consider including a prayer exercise from Communio's Spiritual Growth Resources catalog as an insert in your bulletin.
        - Invite couples to participate in any upcoming Ongoing Engagement or Growth Journey activities.
        - Consider offering childcare during a communal adoration session for spouses to pray
        - Consider hosting family adoration