

5 Easter C 2019 SML
JN 13:31-33a,34-35

This evening's (morning's) gospel begins with Judas leaving the Last Supper in the Upper Room. None of the Apostles realized why Judas left. Some thought he left to buy something for the feast or buy something for the poor. But Judas, instead of going out to buy, had gone out to sell; nor would it be to the poor that he went, but to the rich in charge of the temple treasury. Judas went out, "and it was night" a fitting description for the deed of darkness.

The words of Our Blessed Lord flowed more freely once the restraint of the traitor had been removed. And what He then chose to talk about was love. "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you should love one another."

It's spring. And love is in the air. Spring is the most popular time of the year to celebrate a wedding. Everyone loves a wedding. If the human heart does not have enough love in its heart, it seeks out those who are in love, and where is love most obvious, but at a wedding. And on that day, the husband is marrying the daughter of the gods, and the wife is marrying her strong Apollo.

But eventually, after a few years of married life, they make the startling discovery that the wife is not the daughter of the gods nor is the husband her strong Apollo. So then what? Well, Our Blessed Lord gives us the answer to that question.

The love of husband and wife models the love of Our Blessed Lord, as husbands are called to love their wives the way Our Blessed Lord loves them, and wives are called to love their husbands the way Our Blessed Lord loves them. It's a divine call. It's a divine kind of love. So let's talk practically speaking, about love in marriage, as love in marriage lets the other win.

If you were asked to name three areas where you and your spouse disagree, you'd likely be able to do it without thinking very hard. And I dare say you'd probably be able to produce a "top ten" list if given a few more minutes. And sadly, unless one of the two of you starts doing some "giving in," these same top ten issues are going to remain in the top ten.

Granted, holding your own is not always bad. Some things are worth standing up for and protecting. Priorities, morals and obedience to God should be guarded with great effort. But too often it's over piddling things, like the color of wall paint. I remember while growing up, my Dad was spackling holes and

getting ready to paint my parents' bedroom room, I asked about the color and he said, "Whatever your Mother decides." When I asked him what he thought about the color, he said, "Dan, I do the painting. Your mother does the choosing." And when I called my Mother on it, she said, "That's right. And God bless your Father, he's working as fast as he can, but I'm two rooms ahead of him."

Other times, of course, the stakes are much higher.

- ✓ One wants another child. The other doesn't.
- ✓ One wants to go on vacation with the extended family. The other doesn't.
- ✓ One thinks it's time for marriage counseling. The other doesn't.

The issues don't come up every day, but they resurface time and again, and don't really go away. You never seem to get any closer to resolution or compromise. The heels just keep digging in. It's like driving with the brakes on.

There's only one way to get beyond stalemates like these, and that's finding a word that's the opposite of stubbornness – and that word is "willing." It's an attitude and spirit of cooperation that should permeate every marriage. It's like the palm tree by the ocean that endures the greatest winds because it knows how to bend. And the one best example of it

is Our Blessed Lord, who gives us the best advice in today's gospel. "Love one another as I have loved you." Our Blessed Lord . . .

- ✓ Who had every right to refuse becoming a man but He yielded and did, because He was willing.
- ✓ Who had the right to be served by all mankind but served us instead because He was willing.
- ✓ Who had the right to live in peace and safety but laid down His life for our sins, because He was willing.
- ✓ Who endured the grueling torture of the cross, because He was willing.

He loved, cooperated, and was willing to do His Father's will instead of His own.

In light of the fact that Our Blessed Lord was "willing," the Bible applied two - one verse summaries: In Philippians 2:5, "Have this attitude in yourself which was also in Christ Jesus." And in today's gospel, "Love one another as I have loved you." It means laying down for the good of others what you have the right to claim for yourself.

All it takes for your present arguments to continue is for both of you to stay entrenched and unbending. But the very moment one of you says, "I'm willing to go your way on this one," the argument will be over. And though the follow-through

may cost you some pride and discomfort, you have made a loving, lasting investment in your marriage.

“But I’ll look foolish. I’ll lose the fight. I’ll lose control.” Well,

- ✓ you may have already looked foolish by being bullheaded and refusing to listen
- ✓ you’ve already lost the fight by making this issue more important than your marriage
- ✓ and you may already have lost control when you lost control.

The wise and loving thing to do is to start approaching your disagreements with a willingness to not always insist on your own way. That’s not to say your spouse is necessarily right or wise in the matter, but you are choosing to give strong consideration to their preference as a way of valuing them and your marriage.

St. James said it best. “The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, ‘willing to yield.’” (3:17) Instead of treating your spouse like someone to be guarded against, treat them as your spouse.

You will not always see eye-to-eye. You’re not supposed to be carbon copies of each other. If you were, one of you would not be necessary. Two people who always share the same opinions and perspectives won’t have any balance or

flavor to enhance the relationship. Rather, your differences are for listening to and learning from.

Are you willing to let the other win, or would you rather refuse in the name of pride? If it doesn't matter in the long run, especially in eternity, then let the other win. Choose to love one another as Christ loves you.