

2-16-20 Homily by Fr. Henry Wertin

The True Meaning of Christian Marriage

Today Jesus gives us one of his less popular teachings that we need to pass on to our children. It's about The True Meaning of Christian Marriage.

- He tells us that if a couple is truly married, that marriage cannot be dissolved except by the death of one of the spouses.
- He tells us that because of this, divorce and remarriage is not an option for his followers - it is the same thing as committing adultery which is against the sixth commandment.
- This is why divorced and remarried Catholics should not present themselves to receive communion - because they are in a state of opposition to God's plan for their lives; they are not in "communion" with his will.
- The True Meaning of Christian Marriage is a less popular teaching even to the point that in the Diocese of Pueblo, the Guidelines for Godparents and Sponsors state, that, "If married, my marriage is recognized as valid by the Catholic Church" and "If not married, I am not living conjugally with someone."

But why does Jesus teach such a hard doctrine? Isn't he being excessively harsh?

- To answer those questions, we have to take some time to reflect on the meaning of marriage from God's perspective.
- So, what is the sacrament of marriage, from God's perspective?
- It's called "the marriage bond."
- Understanding "the marriage bond" is the only way to understand Catholic teaching about divorce, remarriage, and annulment.

When two people get married;

- **They pledge their whole selves to one another, unconditionally, out of love.**
- **And in so doing they become, as it were, one person.**
- **They are bonded together.**
- **Two separate individuals have come together and freely entered into a new, unified life in which the spouses live no longer for themselves, but for each other.**
- **A new physical-spiritual reality has come into existence: a permanent bond between husband and wife.**

Jesus himself explained the marriage bond, quoting Genesis:

“Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh...”

- **As Christ put it, “What God has joined together, no human being must separate”**
Jesus thinks so highly of this natural institution of marriage, in fact, that he elevated it to the level of a sacrament.

For baptized Christians, therefore, the natural bond of marriage is reinforced with the strength of God's grace, and transformed into a supernatural reality, a way for the spouses to love not only each other and their children, but also God and the Church.

As we continue with this Mass, in which Jesus renews his commitment to each one of us, let's renew our commitment to him, and to following his plan for our lives. Today, Jesus gives us one of his less popular teachings that we need to pass on to our children. It's about **The True Meaning of Christian Marriage.**