

Prophets plant the seeds that that one day will grow.

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time – Year B

Dt 18:15-20 , Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 7-9, 1 Cor 7:32-35, Mt 4:16



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Good morning. As I reflect on these readings, the words of St. Paul occupy my thoughts. In our second reading, it seems as though he is saying that any life is better than the married life. He presents marriage as a distraction in our relationship to God. In the third chapter of 1st Corinthians, St. Paul asks, “Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” This feels disconnected. Biblical commentators explain this away by saying that St. Paul was preaching in what he thought to be the end times. We are still here. Let me go on record, marriage is not an impediment in our relationship to God.

Msgr. Bill Fitzgerald once shared that he knew of no way in which a man and women could more intimately share life with each other and God, than within marriage. With a commitment to love for better and for worse, their love grows. In the celebration of that love, as partners in creation, they bring forth new life into the world. In sharing the joys and tribulations of marriage their trust and love for each other matures. In living that love for each other they touch the Sacred. Let me be clear, marriage is not a distraction from God but an invitation to intimacy with him. This is equally true for the single and celibate life. Whatever our lifestyle, we are called to become more loving.

We have many St. Tom’s families that post Facebook pictures of their small children. These are pictures of their children laughing and just being children. From the looks on their faces, they know, implicitly, that they are loved. The smiles and laughter of these little ones confirm for the world that there is something more. That is a blessing in the midst of a pandemic. I am amazed in these times that we cannot find consensus. Do we not all want the same? Do we not all want economic opportunity to provide and care for the families that we love? Is that not a common denominator?

A teacher, who lives a single lifestyle, shared with me that one of her students was experiencing difficulty with the material she presented. She contacted the student outside of class asking if they had questions and that she was available to help. That was a loving gift of time. We are called to share our love, not as an appeasement, but as a gift without strings.

Our first reading today refers to a future prophet. Both Jewish and Christian communities understood this reference to the Messiah. For Christians, Jesus is that fulfillment. Who are our prophets today? Think about that. When Jesus walked the earth, he taught that, “The Kingdom of God is at hand... Love one another as I have loved you.” St. Paul was convinced that the world as they knew it would soon be gone.

Some 2000 years later, we understand that the Kingdom is not only a future event. It is now. The Kingdom is our relationship to each other, and in our relationship to each other, God. In this wondrous gift of creation, we discover that we are the object of the Creator’s love. Loving parents help us to understand that. Our love in the world, as married, single, or celibate gives testimony that the Kingdom is at hand. The prophets of today are those that love in this world. They are parents and educators along with all those that sacrifice themselves in love, “*Planting the seeds that will one day grow and watering the seeds already planted.*” Untener

Jesus shared a profound relationship to the Creator. In that love, he stands in the synagogue and teaches with great authority. The St Tom’s community teaches with the loving service they show to our greater community. It gives assurance that the Kingdom of God is indeed at hand.

References

All scripture quotations are taken from. (1987). *The New American Bible, Revised edition*. USCCB.

I welcome your questions and comments. My email is fsila@sttomskazoo.org.

Note: Due to Covid-19 this homily was not delivered in person but posted on the St. Thomas More Catholic Student Parish website.

Untener, Bishop K., The Romero Prayer.

Note: *The prayer that I have drawn from was composed by Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw, drafted for a homily by Cardinal John Dearden in Nov. 1979 for a celebration of departed priests. As a reflection on the anniversary of the martyrdom of Bishop Romero, Bishop Untener included in a reflection book a passage titled "The mystery of the Romero Prayer." The mystery is that the words of the prayer are attributed to Oscar Romero, but they were never spoken by him.*