

A reading from the First Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians

Brothers and sisters:

Put on, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved,

heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience,

bearing with one another and forgiving one another,

if one has a grievance against another;

as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do.

And over all these put on love,

that is, the bond of perfection.

And let the peace of Christ control your hearts,

the peace into which you were also called in one Body.

And be thankful.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,

as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another,

singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs

with gratitude in your hearts to God.

And whatever you do, in word or in deed,

do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,

giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The Word of the Lord. *R. Thanks be to God*

Commentary

This selection of the Colossians letter describes to the people what they should do now, in light of their resurrection with Christ Jesus. Throughout much of the New Testament there are descriptions of what is necessary for a good and flourishing Christian community. These readings work well for the wedding liturgy, for the ideals of a good society are the ideals for a good marriage.

The list of characteristics that opens the passage is one that every couple should regularly review. Spending a lifetime growing richly in heartfelt compassion, humility, gentleness, forgiveness, etc. will be a lifetime well spent. The perfection of these attributes will be love. The biblical image of love is not an emotion or feeling, but here, it is the glue and the motivator for each person to pursue a more Christ-like way of life.

Verse 15 references the “Body,” which is the Church as the Body of Christ. But in the wedding liturgy, it could refer to the fact that the two now become one through this sacrament. This reading would be a nice complement to the Genesis and Gospel readings referencing the two becoming one flesh, one body.

The passage ends with an inspiring command to “let the word of Christ dwell in your richly,” and in all things, “give thanks to God the Father.” For Catholics, this can be a gentle reminder of the importance of Sunday Mass. We open our hearts to receive the word of Christ when the scriptures are proclaimed at Mass, and we give thanks at the altar of the Lord. We go to Mass not out mere obligation, but out of love, a love which binds us to one another and to God who is Love.