

27nd Sunday – B 2018 Deacon Pat Hall

Genesis 2:18-24; Hebrews 2:9-11; Mark 10:2-16

Homilies are vehicles for breaking open the Word of God. First read the Sunday readings at <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/100718.cfm>

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We are made for perfect love.

That is where we are most clearly seen as daughters and sons of God.

While the word, divorce, catches our ears and attention, Jesus is really teaching us about marriage.

He is preaching about the love for which we were made and destined.

As such, we are called to look beyond the love of a husband and a wife, but also to that intimate relationship between God and his people.

This Gospel speaks not just to married people, but also to those called to the single life and those called to the ordained or religious life.

I have some difficulty understanding the celibate life, but I have a priest friend who helped me to understand a bit better, if only just a little bit.

He asked me to think about the love and relationship I have with my wife, Jan. He asked me to think about how it is unconditional and for life.

I ponder the graces that bolster and build our relationship, as I am ever “more married” each year and each decade as God supplies the love for me to love her.

He told me that the love that I reserve exclusively for my wife is akin to the love with which he loves his whole congregation, a love that is supplied through the graces of his ordination.

That priest lovingly dedicates himself to us the way I dedicate myself to Jan. It’s enough to make you cry it is so beautiful.

Maybe that is why our hearts ache so,
just like when we hear of a divorce between friends,
when we hear of a priest who forsakes his ordination promises.

It is all about perfect love.

It is not the imaginary ideal that is put in front of us
that we are to frustratingly pursue
with no hope of attaining.

This is sacrificial love.
This is the love where one's own well-being is enhanced
when one puts the well-being of others before their own.

Again... this is the love where one's own well-being is enhanced
when one puts the well-being of others before their own.

This is Jesus language.
This is where the first shall be last and the last shall be first.
This isn't merely about getting an eternal reward later for giving up one's
own way now.
This is about becoming *more* now
by sacrificing for the other.

I am reminded of my dear Mom and Dad, God rest their souls.
They had a good marriage, lots of love.
But I also remember a lot of bickering.
It was to the point that I vowed not to have that in my own marriage.

They had a typical Ozzie and Harriet relationship
(sorry, that's a mid-20th Century reference—look it up on Youtube).
He went out to work and she worked at home.
She was the one who laid down the rules of the household and made sure
everyone was cared for.

In their retirement years, Mom developed Alzheimer's.
Dad became *her* primary care-giver.
As you can imagine, that was tough.
She passed when she was 89 and Dad was caring for her up until the end.
He was 95 at the time.

Through that difficult time of care giving, I saw a transformation in Dad.
Now he had always been my hero, a member of the Greatest Generation,
donchaknow.
And yet, through that difficult time I saw my father grow gentler, sweeter, and
closer to God.
The example he had set for me and my brothers had always been high, but
now I aspire to be the man my dad became in his 90's.

This is the sacrificial love that takes us from dark to light,
from being merely a mortal creature of the earth to life everlasting.

This is participating in Christ's paschal mystery, his life, death and resurrection.

We are called to enter into that mystery, to experience it, to share it and ultimately, become who we were created to be-- nothing short of Jesus-like.

This is not pie-in-the-sky.

We have our canonized saints and those saints we personally know like our grandmas and grandpas.

They have shown that we can cooperate with the graces God freely bestows so we can conform our lives to Christ

We all know of wonderful relationships.

We all know of broken relationships.

I dare say that the wonderful relationships shone with God's sacrificial grace.

I dare say the broken relationships smelled of "my way".

We come together today in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit.

As we come to his altar of sacrifice, may we enter into his life, death and resurrection.

May we become sweeter, gentler, and closer to God and each other.

You were made for perfect love.

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