

AUGUST 14, 2020
Memorial of St. Maximilian Kolbe, Martyr
Matthew 19: 3-12

“LET ANYONE ACCEPT THIS WHO CAN.”

There is a difference in perspective regarding marriage and divorce before and during Jesus' time. Jesus radically changed its perspective that's why the Pharisees came to Him to test Him. They were aware that He will often went much further and even, at times, to the point of undermining the Jewish law. This was one of the occasions wherein the Jewish leaders wanted to test how faithful Jesus was to the Jewish law on marriage. And they were right, His teaching was more far from the Jewish law and even a revolutionary one. "Before Jesus' Incarnation, divorce was considered necessary. Laws regulating divorce even appear in the Bible (see Dt 24:1-4). Before Jesus saved us, polygamy, not monogamy, was widely practiced. Before Jesus, single persons were usually considered cursed. Before Jesus, our understanding of love, marriage, sexual relations, the dignity of the human person, and vocations was very incomplete and perverted. After we accept Jesus as Lord of our lives, we have the grace to develop great marriages of total self-giving. This usually results in large, happy, and beautiful families. In Christ, the divorced do not live lives of serial polygamy but lives of heroic faithfulness. They love unilaterally and unconditionally, as Jesus loves. Also, after Jesus has saved us, we see those who are single for the Lord as prophetic signs of our future lives in the kingdom of heaven. Look at your vocation to the married or single life. Is your marriage or divorce B.C. or A.D.? Are you decidedly and delightfully single? Or are you merely "unmarried"? In Christ, all relationships and vocations are radically transformed. "This means that if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old order has passed away; now all is new!" (2 Cor 5:17)¹

My brothers and sisters, Jesus is urging us to live, be faithful and do our best to practice our chosen vocation which is the field for our holiness. Let us look on St.

¹ www.catholicsermons.com/one_bread_one_body

Maximilian Kolbe, a priest and a martyr, the feast we celebrate today. “St. Maximilian Kolbe was very active in promoting the Immaculate Virgin Mary and is known as the Apostle of Consecration to Mary. Much of his life was strongly influenced by a vision he had of the Virgin Mary when he was 12. ‘That night I asked the Mother of God what was to become of me. Then she came to me holding two crowns, one white, the other red. She asked me if I was willing to accept either of these crowns. The white one meant that I should persevere in purity, and the red that I should become a martyr. I said that I would accept them both.’ In 1918, he was ordained a priest and continued his work of promoting Mary throughout Poland. Over the next several years, Kolbe took on publishing. In 1936, Kolbe's poor health forced him to return home to Poland, and once the WWII invasion by Germany began, he became one of the only brothers to remain in the monastery. On February 17, 1941, the monastery was shut down; Kolbe was arrested by the German Gestapo and taken to the Pawiak prison. Three months later, he was transferred to Auschwitz. Never abandoning his priesthood, Kolbe was the victim to severe violence and harassment. Toward the end of his second month in Auschwitz, men were chosen to face death by starvation to warn against escapes. Kolbe was not chosen but volunteered to take the place of a man with a family. It is said during the last days of his life Kolbe led prayers to Our Lady with the prisoners and remained calm. He was the last of the group to remain alive, after two weeks of dehydration and starvation. The guards gave him a lethal injection of carbolic acid. St. Maximilian Kolbe died on August 14 and his remains were cremated on August 15, the same day as the Assumption of Mary feast day.”² My brothers and sisters, even if we don’t die as a martyr, we are called to die for our faith everyday, be faithful to Christ and as a husband be faithful to your wife, as a wife be faithful to your husband. Let us make our family, our home the place of Christ’s love. St. Maximilian Kolbe pray for us.

² www.catholic.org