

FEBRUARY 25, 2022
Friday of the 7th Week in OT
James 5: 9-12; Mark 10: 1-12

“YES MEANS YES AND NO MEANS NO.”

These past days we learned a lot from the Letter of St. James and today and tomorrow will be the last days we will hear from him. Today's reading is another great word from him wherein he focusses on the way we speak about other people and to our God. He said: “Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. Do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or by any other oath.”¹ We need to take care of our words that can lead us to sin against one another and to God. “He tells them they should stop grumbling against each other and show more tolerance and patience. The community should not be divided. It is a sign of a lack of love among them. Instead of grumbling against the hardships they have to undergo, James suggests they might take as models some of the prophets of the Old Testament, who often suffered many trials in their work for God. Or they might imitate the quiet perseverance of Job, who never once uttered a word of complaint as he saw his family and possessions disappear before his eyes. Also, he cautions them against indiscriminate swearing because it can involve disrespect to God (especially if what is being sworn about is not true). James is not condemning the taking of solemn oaths, rather, he is condemning the rude use of God's name or a sacred object to guarantee the truth of what is spoken.”² He further said as a Christians our words are enough to make other believe and oaths are unnecessary. Let our ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ mean ‘No.’ We must be known by our integrity, honesty, openness, and transparency. We are people of our word.

It is also true in our relationship with one another especially those who devote themselves to their husband and wife. We can say that Jesus in our gospel is teaching us

¹ James 5: 9, 12 Holy Bible NRSVCE Canadian Bible Society

² livingspace.sacredspace.ie

two things: “1. Jesus is attacking a situation where men, when they got tired of their spouse and found someone more interesting, simply wrote a piece of paper and unilaterally dumped the first wife, leaving her high and dry. Jesus rightly deplores such a situation. His final remark indicates something new for his time (and often not yet accepted in our own): equal rights and equal responsibilities for both partners. Women are not commodities to be picked up and dropped off at will. 2. Divorce as we experience it in our society today often involves a genuine breakdown in the marriage relationship which neither partner wishes, and which is a cause of deep pain and suffering to both sides. It may be due to some element of immaturity at the time of marriage or the partners growing apart as they develop as persons. Whatever the reason, this situation is quite different from the one Jesus is speaking of. One feels that that Jesus would be most sympathetic to the painful breakdowns of marriage which happen today and, as Christians, we too should try to empathise with people in such a situation.”³

My brothers and sisters, we are called to be faithful, loving and carry out our duties to maintain, develop and nurture relationship for the good of one another and people around us like our family and friends. We pray for those people who are struggling in their married life, and they may seek marriage counseling to further understand one another. For those who were separated, may we have compassion and understanding to their situation and may the Lord strengthen them in those trying times. So, let us ask the Lord that we may be faithful and patient to one another and always have space for understanding and dialogue.

³ ibid