

OCTOBER 3, 2021  
Sunday of the 27<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time  
Mark 10: 2-16

“NO LONGER TWO BUT ONE.”

“A few years ago, there was a man whose wife became seriously ill with Alzheimer’s disease. She completely lost all of her memory and her ability to remember who she was or who anyone else was. She was in a nursing home and her husband came by to sit beside her bed and be beside her every day. One of his sons told him that he didn’t need to keep doing that because she didn’t remember who she was and she didn’t remember who he was. The man said: ‘I know she doesn’t remember anything, but I do. I remember who she is and I remember who I am. I am the husband who said to her 55 years ago, ‘I will love and cherish you for better or worse and in sickness and health.’ And I intend to do just that.”<sup>1</sup>

Our First Reading and Gospel are two of the many and most important texts in the Sacred Scripture in terms of marriage and love. It is a fitting reminder for our married couples and those who are planning to get married in the Church. Also, a significant reminder of the faithfulness of God to us. God is faithful even when we are unfaithful to Him.

Our first reading is part of the creation story and reveals that ancient Israelites understood the importance of man and woman being two become one. “The woman is made of the rib of man, and, hence, she is literally ‘bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh.’ Figuratively, ‘bone’ stands for strength and ‘flesh’ stands for weakness. Woman’s origin makes her one with man. God deliberately created man and woman to bond permanently with one another. The clearest expression of this bonding is found in the marriage of a man and woman and their co-creation, with God, of a child, making of the three a new

---

<sup>1</sup> stories4homilies.blogspot.com

family unit. Woman is found to be a 'suitable partner' for man. That is why, God says, 'a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife' with the result that, 'the two of them become one flesh.' The Genesis text attributes two essential qualities to marriage: unity (the two shall become one) and complementarity or mutual interdependence. The theme of marital bonding, which is essential for human fulfillment and happiness in marriage and families explains Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce. Divorce reveals an absence of marital bonding."<sup>2</sup> We recognize that it is not always easy for two persons in a marriage to get along with one another. Marriage is one of the most pleasing of all relationships but also one of the most challenging, difficult and demanding. Both of them, husband and wife bring into their married life their own strengths and weaknesses, loves and hates, hurts and wounds, hopes and fears. That's why, the first prerequisite for a long and lasting marriage is that both of the spouses must learn to accept each other: two imperfect and inadequate human beings. "A British couple holds the Guinness world record for the longest marriage. Percy and Florence Arrowsmith married on June 1, 1925 and celebrated their 80th anniversary on June 1, 2005. 'I think we're very blessed, Florence, 100, told the BBC. 'We still love one another, that's the most important part.' Asked for the secret of their long marriage, Florence said you must never be afraid to say 'sorry.' 'You must never go to sleep bad friends,' she said. Of course, she's right. There are times in every marriage for forgiving and forgetting and saying, 'I'm sorry,' and going to sleep good friends. That's positive sentiment override. By the way, Florence's husband Percy, 105, said his secret to marital bliss was, 'Are you able to overlook one another's faults and forgive one another's mistakes?'"<sup>3</sup> The Church recognizes the right of the married couple to be separated, if and when their relationship breaks down and reconciliation is impossible. This is really a commitment to be one, and those who would like to get married must be a product of love, humility, sacrifice and mutual

---

<sup>2</sup> ibid

<sup>3</sup> ibid

understanding, so that divorce or separation be avoided. Each must be the right person for the other that means building a relationship based on dedicated, forgiving and sacrificial love. It also demands an act of togetherness, close cooperation, adjustments, patience, generosity and will to forgive and ask for forgiveness. Praying together and putting God as the center of their lives. This symbol of marriage is nothing else but sign of God's faithfulness, truthfulness, reconciliation and love to us.

I would also like to acknowledge and be aware of last Thursday celebration, the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. I'm only five years here in Canada and trying piece by piece to know it's history and culture. Like a child, I'm learning everyday. As a priest here in Calgary, my Church, the Roman Catholic Church contributed to that pain and suffering of our Indigenous people. With that I apologise and ask for forgiveness for the physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, cultural, and sexual abuses committed by some members of our Catholic community to our beloved brothers and sisters, children in the residential schools. I would like to offer my heartfelt apology and profound remorse using the statement of Canadian Catholic Bishops in their Letter of Apology: "We commit ourselves to continue accompanying you, the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples of this land. Standing in respect of your resiliency, strength, and wisdom, we look forward to listening to and learning from you as we walk in solidarity. A delegation of Indigenous survivors, Elders/knowledge keepers, and youth will meet with the Holy Father in Rome in December 2021. Pope Francis will encounter and listen to the Indigenous participants, so as to discern how he can support our common desire to renew relationships and walk together along the path of hope in the coming years. We pledge to work with the Holy See and our Indigenous partners on the possibility of a pastoral visit by the Pope to Canada as part of this healing journey." [https://www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Statement\\_from\\_CBC\\_to\\_Indigenous-EN.pdf](https://www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Statement_from_CBC_to_Indigenous-EN.pdf)

Here in the Diocese of Calgary, the Church and Bishop McGrattan committed to put this statement into a reality. They already had meetings with the Indigenous communities in southern Alberta and will continue to do so to achieve truth and reconciliation among our Indigenous brothers and sisters. As a priest of this diocese and of this land, I am willing to work and participate in this essential act of healing, respect, reconciliation and understanding.

Let this be our prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, you are always faithful to us even if we are unfaithful. Bless our married couples who are struggling and challenged. Give them patience, understanding, humility and courage to forgive one another. Give strength to those who are separated and vigor to continue achieving their mission in life inspite of brokenness and hurt. Your love is everlasting and look on us beyond our sins and weaknesses. We also pray for children who died in the residential schools, their families and survivors that First Nations, Métis and Inuit people may receive justice and peace through our collective effort. May all of us be instruments of love, unity, truth and reconciliation. Amen.”