

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 7, 2018



REFLECTION

Today's Gospel passage is popular at weddings. "And the two shall become one flesh" (Mark 10:8). Jesus reiterates this teaching as the Pharisees once again challenge Jesus saying that Moses permitted divorce. Jesus reminds the Pharisees of the sacredness of the marriage union, that it is a lifelong commitment we must all support. In fact, in the Catholic Marriage ritual, the priest will ask the congregation to publicly commit to supporting the married couple. Ninety-five percent of the world's population will be married at some point in their lives; however, in the United States there is a fifty percent divorce rate. Marriage as a sacred institution can seem vulnerable. However, from the very beginning (see the story of creation in Genesis), marriage has been blessed by God and is truly a sacred and holy vocation. With God's grace, prayer, and commitment, the vision God planted in Eden those many years ago can be lived into fruition.

? QUESTIONS

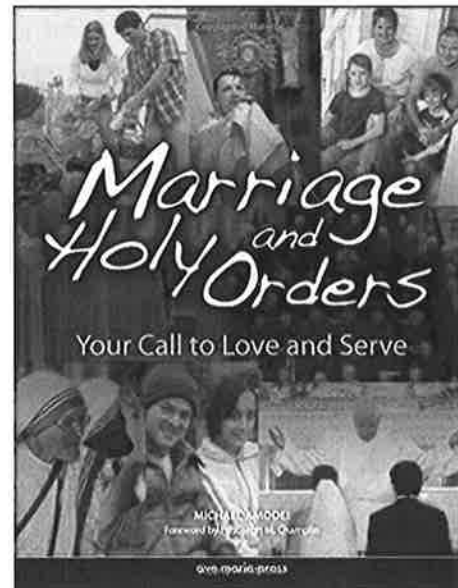
- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How do your current life choices reflect God's abundant love for you?
- ❖ What qualities do you hope to nurture in your future spouse?



ACTION

A popular saying that has some merit is "couples who pray together stay together." It's a catchy phrase and one would think that most people enter into marriage with the hope that it is "until death do us part." Prayer can help. This week, pray for those who are married; that they remain steadfast in their covenant with each other. If you hope to marry one day, pray each day for your future spouse; that God may continue to form him/her and prepare him/her in heart and soul for the Sacrament of Matrimony. Pray also for yourself; that you may find strength in knowing God is forming you too and let your choices reflect that honor.

Marriage and Holy Orders are sacraments of vocation. The book *Marriage and Holy Orders: Your Call to Love and Serve* by Michael Amodei will help your discern God's calling in your life.





October 7, 2018

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #140B

Genesis 2:18-24

Psalms 128:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6

Hebrews 2:9-11

Mark 10:2-16 or Mark 10:2-12

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

This week's Scriptures give a framework to speak about many difficult teen issues. As the sanctity of marriage is the theme, look at issues of chastity, marriage, and divorce in society and in the Church.

Q FOCUS: *To recognize that God created everyone for love.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

St. John Leonardi was the youngest of seven children in a Catholic Italian family during the mid-sixteenth century. He spent over ten years training to be a pharmacist before following his desire to be a priest. He was ordained not long after the Council of Trent, and was zealous in his anti-Reformation efforts and preaching. He founded a religious congregation dedicated to educating Catholics, and a religious seminary to train priests for evangelizing in foreign missions. St. John died from sickness while helping plague victims. His optional memorial is Tuesday, October 9.

Church Teaching Connection

"Indeed Christ the Lord, making a new creation and making all things new, has willed that Marriage be restored to its primordial form and holiness in such a way that what God has joined together, no one may put asunder, and raised this indissoluble conjugal contract to the dignity of a Sacrament so that it might signify more clearly and represent more easily the model of his own nuptial covenant with the Church" (*The Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, 5).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Mark 10:2-12

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

The Pharisees approached Jesus and asked, "Is it lawful for a husband to divorce his wife?" They were testing him. He said to them in reply, "What did Moses command you?" They replied, "Moses permitted a husband to write a bill of divorce and dismiss her." But Jesus told them, "Because of the hardness of your hearts he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, *God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.* So they are no longer

two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate." In the house the disciples again questioned Jesus about this. He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

In today's Gospel, the Pharisees are looking for ways to trap Jesus, so they go straight for the issue of divorce. They aren't actually interested in what Jesus has to teach them about the sanctity of marriage. They are just trying to trap Jesus by getting him to talk about a contentious issue.

► **What contentious issues might someone bring up today in order to trap someone into saying something that could be picked apart or taken the wrong way?**

► **What about divorce was contentious for the Pharisees?**

In Jesus' time, traditional Jewish marriage laws were very different from the laws governing marriage today. Women weren't allowed to divorce their husbands, but men were allowed to divorce their wives. Women who committed adultery could be punished by the law, even stoned, but men sometimes had multiple wives. The Pharisees used this topic to test Jesus. They knew that if he said divorce wasn't okay, it would mean angering some of the Jewish men.

► **How did Jesus respond?**

In his usual style, Jesus goes straight to the heart of the matter. He tries to get people past their human

ways of thinking in order to think like God thinks. God doesn't see the distinctions that you've made in these human laws, Jesus tells the people. When God says that adultery is wrong, he means that marriage is a once-and-for-all sacrament that no person should violate.

► **How do you think the Pharisees reacted to Jesus' proclamation?**

► **How do we hear that the disciples reacted?**

► **How did you react to Jesus' words today?**

► **How do you think other people you know would react?**

Sometimes, Jesus says things that we don't really want to hear. He says things that are really challenging. We feel challenged, not because what Jesus is asking us to do is too hard, but because he asks us to do things that go far beyond what is typically done by people around us.

The Gospel talks about the sanctity of Marriage or Matrimony. Matrimony is one of the seven sacraments. The Sacrament of Marriage is a covenant bond. The Church desires for those who are married to stay together, but there are some cases in which this is not possible. In some cases, certain circumstances can cause the Church to decide to grant an annulment, which basically means that the Church has decided that the marriage was unsound from the start and therefore is not binding. This might happen if one of the partners in a marriage had a substance abuse problem that he or she kept hidden from his or her partner, for example, or if a couple decides to marry at a very young age and the Church decides that they weren't old enough to enter into the marriage with proper judgment. Those who get annulments can still receive sacraments and remarry in the Church. Those who get divorced cannot get remarried in the Church, but that does not mean that these people are not part of our community. Divorced Catholics are encouraged to continue to practice their faith in order to receive God's healing love.

► **What do you think about the Church's teachings on marriage, annulment, and divorce?**

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 42.

What has caused ruptures or arguments in relationships with friends and significant others in the past?

How can you grow in order to be a better friend and partner?

Act on the Word

Getting Married

You will need internet access or a marriage preparation handout or pamphlet from your parish in order to lead this activity.

Along with the teens, check out any information that your parish has online or in handouts or pamphlets about the necessary steps of marriage preparation. What kinds of things do young couples in your parish need to do in order to get married? What does the pre-Cana or marriage preparation program entail? What kinds of decisions do couples need to make about the liturgy? As you walk through these steps, talk about how making these decisions together might help a couple to prepare for marriage.

The Entrance Procession

You will need access to the internet and screens large enough for teens to watch a video.

Watch this video about Catholic weddings and the Entrance Procession: <https://vimeo.com/209281968/887d5042cb>. How is the Catholic vision of the Entrance Procession different than our current cultural expectations for weddings? What do you think about the Catholic vision?

Closing Prayer

*Lord Jesus,
you demanded that the little children
have access to you,
so you announced that to know the Kingdom
of God,
is to embrace it as a little child.
Make us childlike in our service of you this day.
Help us to see that we discover God's love
more easily
when our hearts are not burdened with
selfish pride.
You live and reign for ever and ever.
Amen.*

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.