

## **27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time: Openness and Receptivity**

Genesis 2:18-24; Psalm 128:1-2,3,4-5,6; Hebrews 2:9-11; Mark 10:2-16

Greetings in the Lord!

This weekend's readings invite us to ponder the sacredness and beauty of marriage and the solemn invitation to embrace the spirit of openness and receptivity.

In today's gospel, Jesus invokes the original plan of God for marriage found in the Book of Genesis about its nature and permanence. That God, who is love and who created man and woman for love, has called them to an intimate communion of life and love in marriage, so they are no longer two but one flesh. Thus, our Lord Jesus repeats the truth that because of this oneness, he says, "What God has joined together, no human being must separate" (Mk 2:8). It is much more than human attraction and not just an ordinary contract made by a man and a woman who love each other. It is a covenant designed by God to be permanent and built on the ideal of fidelity which mirrors his enduring love for humanity. Fidelity in marital relationships is the best recipe for a happy and successful marriage. Spouses who learned to be true to themselves, friends, and above all to God safeguard their marriages. Without fidelity to God, it will put marriage relationships in danger.

While our Lord Jesus invokes God's original intention, the integrity, and beauty of the union of husband and wife, he also identifies the common problem – the hardness of heart, which is not only the issue of the breakdown of marriage but it could happen to anyone who followed Jesus. A hardened heart dulls a person's ability to perceive and understand, which causes the relationship to break down and die. It's a terrible disease that doesn't happen overnight. It is a series of neglect and taking things for granted.

Our Lord Jesus proposes a radical attitude. He made the child a model for his listeners to ponder. He said: "Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it" (Mk 2:15). We have heard this many times, and many times we failed. Our Lord is not proposing to be naive. He is inviting us to embrace the openness and receptivity of a child in our relationships with one another. Only the open hand receives gifts, the open mind receives wisdom, and the open heart can receive love.

Some of the best examples of openness and receptivity are found in marital commitment. Those who have been married many years testify that nothing sustains love better than honest communication. It is an obvious truth. As long as the lines of communication are open, the relationship will continue to grow and deepen. Often I heard reflections from couples who went through difficulties in their relationship that it is essential to making time for a heart-to-heart conversation, express appreciation, discuss difficult things, share feelings, and not keep things bottled up, and with absolutely no secrets and hidden agendas.

Another aspect of openness and receptivity in marital commitment is the virtue of forgiveness. I often hear from a wife and sometimes from a husband the words, "I just forgive my husband because he is who he is." Or "I know my wife, I just forgive her." Forgiveness is possible when the spouses are committed to loving without calculating the cost. It is born of sacrifice and a gift, just as Jesus sacrificed himself and forgave us without measure. It means that the offender does not deserve forgiveness, but you give it all because, in the process, you give a gift to yourself. When you forgive, healing takes place in you.

"Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it." I want to think that the dispositions of openness and receptivity are a form of spirituality. To be a child is not about age. It is a spiritual value. That is, if I know how to depend on God and trust him, I am a child. If I trust only myself, if I only rely on my talents, achievements, wealth, then I don't need the power and the goodness of God. A child needs God. I am maybe 90, 80, 70, 60, 50, or 40 years old, but if I continue to place my life in

the hands of God and obey him, I am a child. A child will always accept God's rule and trust in his providence. It is the spirituality of our patron, Saint Therese of the Child Jesus.

Let us entrust ourselves to the maternal care of Our Blessed Virgin Mary, whose heart remains a child before the Father, to intercede for us and to teach and help us to be open and receptive.

May the Lord bless us all the days of our lives.

Fr. Manny Hewe  
Pastor