

Homily 10-7-18
27th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Fr Danny

During the last few weeks in our readings, we've heard a lot about the dignity of the human person. It makes sense with us being in the midst of the 40 Days of Life, trying to figure out what it is to be human, and what is sacred to humanity.

Our readings today build upon that firm foundation; that God creates us to love one another and to be loved by Him. But what comes next? Well, the sanctity of marriage. Because without marriage, from the beginning, there would be none of us. Remember the first promise that God made to humanity was the multiplication – not loaves and fishes – but the multiplication of us. God promised that Abraham's descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky or the sand of the seashore.

God knew that man alone could not survive, we are not asexual beings, we need someone to complement us. And so women came along, and thanks be to God. If it weren't for the women in the church, ironically, the church would not exist today. And for those who look back and say that the church is very patriarchal, that it doesn't like women, look at Jesus. Jesus continually used women to prove a point to men, that they need to listen to them.

(A child in the pews said "yeah, Paw.") Perfect timing! Because Jesus goes on to say, unless you have the faith of children and see the world as children see it, you cannot enter the kingdom of God. Children are a blessing. They are not only the future of our church, they are the present of our church. That's why I preach that I love having kids at Mass. The reason we don't have a nursery (aside from the fact that we don't have a place for it) is that people need to bring their children to Mass.

Because we as a church have failed families. We have failed families. And I want to apologize for that. We have not put together programs good enough to help parents educate their kids. We tell you guys at Baptism prep that the parent has the primary role of catechist for your kids, and then we give you nothing. We don't tell you how to talk to them. We say, bring them to the RE program and we'll do it for you. Then we have them for an hour a week, if that. And that's not sufficient. Because we have your children for an hour, they have the world forever. And what you hear in the church and what you hear in the world sometimes do not ring the same.

A lot of our children's tv programs today don't talk about God, don't talk about love, they bring in all of these things with all those hidden messages. Look back at all of those Disney movies you loved growing up. There are kind of scary messages in some of those.

Now, I love Disney movies, don't get me wrong, I went to Disney this past week thinking it was going to be a great time, and I noticed, wow! there's not a lot of Christianity in here! There's actually a lot of anti-Christian rhetoric in the things we see.

In fact, I went and saw the movie Small Feet this past week. Cute movie. As long as you just watch it on a surface level. The underlying message is "tradition is wrong." Go against it. That's not what they publicized. They showed yetis, and these little people, but you've got this stone keeper who writes the laws on stone, that people have to follow...Moses got the Law written on stone...the underlying current of that film is one that you need to prepare the children who are going to see it. If we don't prepare the children to hear the word of God, they're going to learn their lessons out there.

Another film I watched this last week (I was vacation) was a biography on the life of Mr. Rogers. Oh, my goodness, I did not know so much love could come from one man. If you haven't seen the film "Will You Be My Neighbor," I highly recommend it. I was at tears at multiple points. He gets it! He gets it! He didn't have to say the name God. He didn't have to talk about Jesus. He lived it! And we watched that growing up as kids. He was giving us the message that we needed to hear. He was doing the catechesis that we as families couldn't quite get for some reason. He was meeting the children where they were at, not where they were expected to be.

That's why we've tried to develop this new program that we have here at the parish. To give parents the tools to be catechists for their children. So today after Mass you have that opportunity. If you feel like you were not given the tools as a child, come to class today. We will give you the tools. That's why we're doing this differently, not the "Okay, drop you kids off, go get coffee, and pick them up in an hour." Wash, rinse and repeat. No. We cannot. It's not possible to give your children what they need in such a short amount of time. Because as soon as they leave here, they get the examples that you set for them. Which means that we have to work in our own hearts as well. Because children see the relationship between spouses.

That's why the sanctity of marriage is so important. Cause if they see a family that doesn't understand the concept of fidelity, if they've never seen that

example, how can they learn it? A case in point is my dad's family when he was growing up. He didn't understand the idea of fidelity. He didn't understand when he got married what it meant to be married for life because he'd never seen that example.

My grandparents on my dad's side were both married and remarried three times. There were the yours mine ours his hers theirs and others' children. To this day we debate on how many siblings he actually has. He says 17, I say 27. Because: "Well I guess when so-and-so married mom, I guess they did have three from this marriage, but I mean we weren't really family." And I say, "Yes, you are."

We are all family. Jesus lowered Himself for a time and called us His brothers and sisters. We are all members of the body of Christ. We are all His beloved. That sanctity of life that we're talking about right now is called to be perpetuated through marriage. Through the greatest gift to a married couple, and that is what? Children!

Listen to that, children. You are the biggest blessing in your parents' lives. That is awesome. Remind them of that when they're fighting with one another. Remind them of that when you do something wrong. (It can only be used once!) But God created male and female because He loves us, and He knew that we couldn't do it by ourselves.

The purpose of marriage is what? To continue the faith, but also to get your spouse to heaven. Your role as a husband is to get your wife into heaven. Your role as a wife is to get your husband into heaven. That is your main role to one another. For some that means having children. It means having children sometimes to help each other get to heaven, to bear the labor together, so you can still see the goodness in one another when something's gone wrong.

That yes, you've driven me crazy, yes, you've done this unforgivable thing. But you've also given me this child, who is my life. Who came from me and has life because of me.

Moses allowed divorce because of our hardness of heart. Because we didn't get it right. Because we didn't see that when a man leaves his father and mother and a woman leaves her home and the two are united as one, that nothing can break that apart except for the death of one of those two. We see the divorce rates going higher and higher. Even in the Catholic church. Fifty percent of marriages end in divorce.

I think a lot of that has to do with the fact that we don't know what marriage is about. We as the church don't do a good enough job preparing you to be married. Because for many it's all about the wedding day.

Please don't take this the wrong way, but I don't care about your wedding day. I don't say that to be callous. That's the beginning, but I care about your marriage. If you have this opulent wedding day, and you have all this stuff and you're dressed to the nines, and we're spending 40 thousand dollars on our wedding, and yet we can't support ourselves the next day, what's the point?

The problem is society has told up you've got to have a huge wedding, you've got to invite everyone, because if not, you have no worth or value. I say, that's dumb. Cause they're focusing on an event. I'm focusing on your life. That ideology of having a huge wedding, if you're setting all of your eggs in that basket, and not preparing yourself for the next 20, 30, 62 years, you are missing the point.

How can you love one another when you don't understand what love is? How can we provide for one another when the money is divided? But the two become one flesh. It becomes the couple's problems, not his problems, not her problems. The couple has to fight together not against each other. The couple has to see the dignity of the human person so that they can see the dignity in one another. Because if I'm not perfect and I can accept that, and I can continue to try and develop into a better person, then I can accept the imperfection of my spouse as well

Because many times the person you see when you marry them is not the person you're going to be married to for the rest of your life. Sometimes we're scared to show each other the truth. Sometimes we're scared to truly be ourselves until "She got the ring! Now I can be me!" OOOH, divorce, on the horizon.

We must be completely open with one another. I was doing marriage prep with a couple a few weeks ago, and I was talking about another couple I had married about a year before. And I said "This couple is what I hope every couple can do. they have zero secrets form one another." What?? They don't keep things back?? NO!! WHAT??

For a priest it's hard because I don't have anyone that I have that kind of relationship to, but I have another priest that I tell everything to. Both inside and outside of confession. Why? Because I don't have a spouse. But I had a couple come to me and say, "I can't tell my husband everything. I can't tell my wife

everything.” And they’re holding back. “Oh, but they’d see me differently!” You got the ring. Too late.

Love one another my brothers and sisters. Be open with each other. You are flawed, that’s ok. Many times your spouse loves you BECAUSE of your flaws, even though you don’t recognize that. They recognize that flaw in you and it makes them feel better about their own flaws. Seeing your spouse’s flaws makes you feel better about your own flaws. “Hey at least I didn’t do this!”

Talk to each other. This domestic church thing that I’m a chaplain for, that’s what they’re trying to get couples to do. Some of these couples have been married for two years, some for twenty. Trying to get spouses to have time for just husbands and wives together. Get the kids a babysitter. And talk to each other, not through each other. Social media has killed our ability to communicate with one another. Even with spouses. Texting happens all the time. Put down the dumb phone. Talk to one another. See each other eye to eye face to face and love the person you married.

Remember love is complete sacrifice. And if you’re holding something back, are you really loving your spouse? (Oh no, Father’s asking me to change again! Yes, I am!) I was reminded this past week of two different couples. One was my grandparents. Grandpa died 5 days shy of their 60th wedding anniversary. The last 10 years of their marriage was miserable. She was deaf, and he couldn’t hear. And they could only yell at each other; the only voice they couldn’t hear was each other. They would just tune each other out. “Oh, she’s saying something again!” But the depth of love between them was amazing even to the end.

And then you have my Godparents who are no longer Catholic. Who found any excuse that they could to leave the church. But also any excuse that they could to love their children. And they took the love of their children to such an extent, that it was such an important thing for them that they had to find a place where they could develop it. Unfortunately, it wasn’t in the Catholic faith. And so it’s hard for me when I go back home and have these conversations with them because we talked about life, we talked about love, we talked about humanity, but we’re talking with different terminology. We’re talking from different levels of understanding because I can’t talk to them about God. And it’s hard to talk about love without talking about God. It’s hard talking about family without talking about why we have families. That’s because God loves us. God so loved the world that He gave His own life that we may have the opportunity to return to Him.

But we can’t do it by ourselves. So we get married to one another. To lift one another up. In my weakness, my spouse makes me strong. In your weakness,

your spouse is called to lift you up. Not to push you down and to poke that bear, to poke that button. You guys know each other's buttons by now. Even if you've only been married for six weeks. You know each other's buttons. Why do you push them? "Because I feel better when I push her buttons because she pushes my buttons." Wrong answer! Where's the love?

My brothers and sisters, as we come to this altar today, to that remembrance of that total sacrifice and love may we recognize the gifts that God has given to us in our spouses. In our children. May we give thanks to the Lord, for He is good for His love endures forever.