

COLUMNISTS

Jesus takes marriage seriously

Sunday's Readings: (R3) Mark 10:2-16. (R1) Genesis 2:18-24. (R2) Hebrews 2:9-11.

Way back in 1915 Pope Benedict XV wrote that "the attacks of the wicked are directed primarily against the family.... Hence divorce laws are introduced to put an end to the stability of marriage."

Testing Jesus, some Pharisees asked, "Is it permissible for a husband to divorce his wife?" They argued that Moses permitted divorce. Jesus answered by going back before Moses to the Genesis account of the first marriage. Jesus explained that Moses permitted divorce because of people's stubbornness, but in the beginning it was not so. Man and wife, he said, become one in marriage. "Therefore let no man separate what God has joined."

This answer shocked the Pharisees, for in Jesus' time no one questioned the legitimacy of divorce. All they wanted to know from Jesus was what constituted adequate grounds for divorce. Jesus said there were no grounds. No man may separate what God has joined!

God takes marriage seriously. He included "Thou shalt not commit adultery" right along with "Thou shalt not kill ..." and "Thou shalt not steal." God takes mar-



a word for sunday

BY FATHER ALBERT SHAMON

riage seriously and so did his son, Jesus.

But did this mean that Jesus would have nothing to do with divorced people? Not in the least. Remember his encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob; she had had five husbands. And with the woman taken in adultery. How compassionate he was! He knew the frailty of people and was always ready to forgive. Still, he took marriage seriously and so should we.

The target of the devil today is marriages. The end of a marriage can be devastating — even more so than death. The effects on children are well-known and well-documented. The breakup of a family is serious business, because God takes marriage seriously.

When the Son of God became man to save the world, the first thing he did was to found a home. Thirty of his 33 years on earth he passed in the humble home of Nazareth to teach us how deeply he valued marriage.

Another thing I might say is that there are no perfect marriages. Some say marriages are made in heaven; but good marriages are made through a lot of give-and-take here on earth.

Half of new marriages today do not last. Why is that? A best-selling book of a few years ago was titled *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*.

Physically, mentally, emotionally, men and women do differ. The differences generate personality friction. A lubricant is needed.

And believe it or not, that lubricant is religion. "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it" (Ps 127:1). The father must set the example in the home, for he represents Jesus. He must be loyal to the laws of the church, receive the sacraments frequently, be a man of prayer, and practice charity in the family circle.

The mother must set the example of charity, patience and true piety. The chil-

dren must try to be obedient.

A little boy at Sunday School learned about how Jesus changed water into wine at Cana of Galilee.

"And what did you learn from that story?" asked his father afterward.

The boy thought for a moment and answered, "If you're having a wedding, make sure Jesus is there." Good advice.

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Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

Daily Readings

Monday, October 6

Jonah 1: 2:1-11; Luke 10:25-37

Tuesday, October 7

Jonah 3:1-10; Luke 10:38-42

Wednesday, October 8

Jonah 4:1-11; Luke 11:1-4

Thursday, October 9

Malachi 3:13-20; Luke 11:15-18

Friday, October 10

Joel 1:13-15, 2:1-2; Luke 11:15-26

Saturday, October 11

Joel 4:12-21; Luke 11:27-28

What do we pray for in wartime?

Q. I am Vietnamese, confused about prayers for war. During the war in Vietnam, or anywhere else, how did our priests pray?

Did they pray for their side to kill more enemy? Or for the safety of their military men?

If two sides pray for no casualties, then what? Also, what are we praying for when we bless bombs and bombers and guns? I'm interested in seeing your answer soon. (North Carolina)

A. I wish I had an answer. It seems to be one of those questions most people never thought about much. Maybe it's simply a feeling that somehow the blessing asks God's mercy and compassion on the whole tragic reality of people killing other people by the thousands or millions.

Certainly many share your puzzlement. While some wars may appear more "just" than others, rarely is there a warring nation or group that hasn't somehow



question corner

BY FATHER JOHN DIETZEN

convinced itself that "God is on our side."

I'd appreciate hearing how readers might respond to your good question.

Q. I am mother of three children and wife of a good husband. My sincere wish is to donate my organs when I die so others might live.

My husband and children all disagree. He says I must return to God the way he sent me on earth, all in one piece with nothing missing. My understanding is

that we as Catholics believe donation of our organs is good.

Are they right to oppose my wish? (New York)

A. The tradition and teaching of the Catholic Church totally supports the practice of giving organs of one's body to another, either before or after death.

Obviously, conditions need to be considered before organs can be transplanted, all of which can become complicated.

If the donor is living, for example, physical and emotional dangers must be measured against the benefit to the recipient.

If the organ is to be transplanted after death, proper criteria must be used to be certain the donor is dead and that death is not hastened to facilitate the transplant.

Assuming these kinds of questions are resolved, providing for the gift of our bodily organs is a generous act of charity.

In one way or another we already give our lives to each other throughout our

lives. If medical science enables us to make some gift of ourselves to another even after death, it is an opportunity to be generous about and grateful for.

Pope John Paul II, speaking of the shortage of donors for patients awaiting transplants, has said it is a matter of Christian generosity. "No solution will be forthcoming without a renewed sense of human solidarity."

Here Christ's own example can "inspire men and women to make great sacrifices in the service of others" (April 30, 1990).

As for your husband's objection, very few of us go back to God "all in one piece." It's how we dispose of our time and all the other elements of our earthly life that tells how good stewards we are of the gifts God has given us.

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Father Dietzen is pastor of Holy Trinity Church, 704 N. Main St., Bloomington, Ill. 61701. Address questions to him there.

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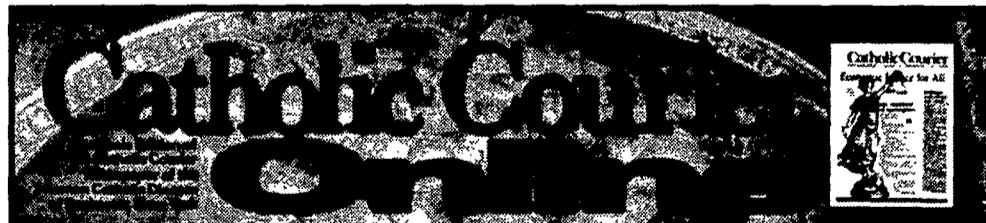
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