

Marriage takes a lifetime

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Oct. 5): (R3) Mark 10:2-16; (R1) Genesis 2:18-24; (R2) Hebrews 2:9-11.

Pharisees came to test Jesus. They began by asking him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife. In answer, Jesus asked, "What did Moses command you?" They answered, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away." Jesus said, "Because of your hardness of heart, Moses gave you this commandment. But from the beginning it was not so. What God has joined together, let no man put asunder."

Where Jesus gave his commentary on divorce is critical to understanding it. Jesus had left Galilee and crossed the Jordan River to Perea. Pharisees in this region, ruled by King Herod Antipas, wanted to know what Jesus thought about divorce. Herod had divorced his first wife and married Herodias, the wife of his own brother. It was this bizarre marriage which John the Baptist criticized, costing him his head. Since the Pharisees were "buddy-buddy" with the Herodians, we can picture them rubbing their hands, anticipating how Jesus might answer this question. They felt any answer would get him in trouble.

Jesus goes all the way back to Genesis for his answer. He puts the focus on marriage in God's initial actions and intentions. "What God has joined together, let no man put asunder."

Jesus' understanding of marriage has four components which are the hallmark of a good marriage.

The first is severance. Marriage changes our ultimate loyalty. Though the influence of parents and friends continues, our final allegiance is to our married partner.

The second is permanence. John Butler Yeats said, "I think a man and a woman should choose each other for life, for the simple reason that a long life with all its accidents is



Father Albert Shamon

A word for Sunday

barely enough for a man and a woman to understand each other, and in this case to understand is to love. The man who understands one woman is qualified to understand pretty well everything." It does take a lifetime for two people to truly understand and love one another.

Sometime back the newspapers carried a photograph of a couple celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. The husband, seated in his wheelchair, wore a white tuxedo while his wife wore a white bridal gown. They held hands and renewed their marriage vows. For them marriage was until death.

The third component is companionship. C.S. Lewis wrote that the thrill of marriage can yield to something even better: "Let the thrill go — go on through the period of death into the quieter interest and happiness that follows — and you will find you are living in a world of new thrills all the time."

No matter how long couples are together, they still need an occasional night out. They need to enkindle not only the fires of romance but also friendship.

The last component is intimacy. In a good marriage, the couple becomes so intimate, so trusting, that all the veils of pretense are pulled aside. A good marriage is not a battlefield, but a safe haven, not the last place you want to be, but the first place.

Jean Vanier would cup his hands as if holding a small, wounded bird and ask, "What would happen if I opened my hands fully? The bird would flutter its wings, and it would fall and die. But what would happen if I closed my hand? The bird would be crushed and die. ... An intimate place is like my cupped hands, neither totally opened nor totally closed. It is the place where growth can take place."

The intimacy that is found in marriage is an inferior reflection of the intimacy we all long for with God. Right relationships with God are primarily expressed through right relationships with other people. Better one solid love relationship than an impersonal attempt to love thousands.

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

Daily Readings

Monday, October 6
Jonah 1:1-2:11; (Ps) Jonah 2:2-5, 8; Luke 10:25-37

Tuesday, October 7
Jonah 3:1-10; Psalms 130:1-4, 7-8; Luke 10:38-42

Wednesday, October 8
Jonah 4:1-11; Psalms 86:3-6, 9-10; Luke 11:1-4

Thursday, October 9
Malachi 3:13-20A; Psalms 1:1-4, 6; Luke 11:5-13

Friday, October 10
Joel 1:13-15, 2:1-2; Psalms 9:2-3, 6, 8-9, 16; Luke 11:15-26

Saturday, October 11
Joel 4:12-21; Psalms 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12; Luke 11:27-28

Join us this October & November

Oct. 6 *Embracing the Cup of My Life*

This second in a five-part series will provide an opportunity to get in touch with the intimate well-spring of our spiritual life. Using Joyce Rupp's book, *The Cup of Our Life*, we will explore the many ways the cup can symbolize our daily joys, struggles, griefs, brokenness and celebrations. Copies of the book will be available for \$10.00. Other sessions: Oct. 20, 27 and November 3. Facilitated by Mary Stanley, Pastoral Associate at St. Mary of the Lake in Skaneateles, Kathleen Owens, Pastoral Associate at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Marcellus, and Sister Rose Raymond Wagner, OSF. 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. Offering: \$5 per session.

Oct. 16 *A Day of My Own*

This special opportunity is offered on the third Thursday of each month and will provide a sacred space for you to "take time out" just to be with God - a time to reflect, pray and be refreshed in any way that will nourish your spirit. Come when you want to just "be"! Lunch will be provided. Offering: \$12.

Oct. 17-19 *Women's Weekend Retreat*

The theme for this weekend will be "The Holy Ground of Prayer." Marnie Bloom-Gowan will present different forms of prayer experiences including Conversational, Benedictine, Ignatian Contemplation and Centering Prayer & Silence. Deacon Michael McGrath will offer reflections on "Prayer in Daily Life". Sister Rose Raymond will give a presentation on "Jesus Prays" Conferences. Mass, time for personal prayer and sharing will be components of this retreat. Friday evening 6:00 (dinner) to Sunday morning. Offering: \$100.

Oct. 19-24 *Directed Retreat (Priests, Religious & Pastoral Ministers)*

For further information or to register call Lis Delaney at the Priests Personnel Office (315) 470-1460.

Oct. 20 *Embracing the Cup of My Life*

Third in the series (see description for Oct. 6)

Oct. 27 *Embracing the Cup of My Life*

Fourth in the series (see description for Oct. 6)

Nov. 3 *Embracing the Cup of My Life*

Last in the series (see description for Oct. 6)

Nov. 19 *Father-Son Twilight Retreat*

"As I Have Loved You" This special time is offered to fathers and their sons to spend together, enjoying a wonderful meal, an inspiring talk and some reflection/prayer time together. Our presenter will be the Rt. Rev. Gladstone B. "Skip" Adams (1) Bishop of The Episcopal Diocese of Central New York. 6:00 (dinner followed by presentation). Offering: \$35 per father/son.

Nov. 20 *A Day of My Own*

This special opportunity is offered on the third Thursday of each month and will provide a sacred space for you to "take time out" just to be with God - a time to reflect, pray and be refreshed in any way that will nourish your spirit. Come when you want to just "be"! Lunch will be provided. Offering: \$12.



Stella Maris Retreat and Renewal Center

130 East Genesee St., Skaneateles, New York 13152

315-685-6836



letters@catholiccourier.com

Kids' Chronicle

Answers from page 12: 1. 40, 2. 12, 3. 72, 4. 5,000, 5. 144,000, 6. 1, 7. 3