

Deacon Tony's homily for the 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time October 4th, 2015

It's been a week now since the Pope has returned to Rome and we have good memories about his visit and how the people of the United States showed so much interest in our Holy Father and expressed such pleasure in his visit. You have heard many people say how much they like this Pope. His concern that Catholics are concerned about the poor and marginalized seems to attract people of all faiths. However I got the sense that many thought he was going to change the rules to bring the Church up to the 21st century.

Some things haven't changed. We see in today's Gospel that the Pharisees, in trying to test Jesus, asked Him if it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife. Jesus told them about God's original plan;

THAT THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH!

And that it was only because of the hardness of the people's hearts that Moses allowed a decree of divorce. See, some things never change. People still allow their hearts to harden and refuse to follow when the Church points out God's plan for our lives.

I want to make one point perfectly clear and many people are unaware of the Churches teaching regarding divorce. Some people believe that because they have gotten a divorce that they are automatically excommunicated from the Church. This is not true. You can be divorced and be in full union with the Church; able to receive the Eucharist and the Sacraments without reservation. Many people just stop attending Catholic Mass because of their divorce. **This happening at a time when they need the Church even more.**

We see **many people returning to the Church** through our "Christ Renews His Parish" weekends and are able to hear their stories of feelings of abandonment at a crucial time in their lives. We are so happy to be able to welcome them home and let them know that there is a place for them at the table.

Now the plot thickens when people remarry outside of the Church. The Church does not allow full participation in the sacraments until the first marriage is annulled.

Marriage is a sacrament of the Church that unites a husband and a wife with Jesus in marriage.

The two make vows that they will be faithful until death, to one another. Jesus is always faithful and is always calling them to be faithful to their vows. It is not natural for two to become one flesh but in a marriage that is centered on Jesus, it is not only natural but gratifying to sacrifice our desires for the pleasure of your spouse. When we turn to Jesus in all things, He will turn our hearts to our spouse so that we can have a spiritual relationship; one that will grow stronger as we grow older and will be a strong foundation for our true happiness.

If we do not know, for sure, that we have a personal relationship with Jesus, then that should be first priority in our lives. Especially if we are contemplating starting a new relationship that requires us to another more than we love ourselves.

So the Church advises us to slow down before we remarry. And follow God's rules which are the sure way of obtaining true happiness.

When you begin the annulment process you review your first marriage to find out the reasons it failed. This is key to making sure that you don't make the same mistakes.

You agree to go to preparation classes in order to communicate your beliefs with each other so that each of you knows who you are marrying. What you are signing onto.

It prevents you from rushing and allows you more time to pray and seeks to know the Lord's way for you. Without Jesus leading, you will miss the greatest roadmap to a successful marriage and life.

CRHP can be a great opportunity to meet Jesus, in the Spirit, and begin a relationship that will be a positive force in your quest for true happiness.