

Friday's Gospel: Called to Love Eternally

Gospel for Friday in the 7th Week of Ordinary Time, and commentary.

Gospel (*Mk 10:1-12*)

And Jesus left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again; and again, as his custom was, he taught them.

And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” He answered them, “What did Moses

command you?" They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to put her away." But Jesus said to them, "For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder."

And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

Commentary

Jesus is with a large crowd of people. There He listens, accompanies, teaches, heals – even those who do not want to listen, learn or be healed. Some Pharisees come to test Him, to try to take away the moral authority that everyone recognizes in our Lord. With this aim, they ask Jesus a question about divorcing one's wife.

Jesus rises above the casuistry and goes right to the heart of the problem: to the intimacy of every relationship of authentic love. When a man and a woman love each other, is that love something that can be considered temporary, lasting as long as one finds the other person useful? On the contrary, every relationship, not just the spousal one, if it is true, is indissoluble. A friendship, if it is true, is indissoluble.

A father never stops being a father. If a father denies his child, he is

desecrating that relationship, the truth of that relationship. If a father does not recognize his son, that man has ceased to have a heart.

The relationships between people are not reduced to what is convenient or not convenient. Authentic love refuses to enter into that logic.

God, through the redemption, brings about something that Moses couldn't accomplish. Moses ends up bowing down before the hardness of the human heart. He is unable to go any farther.

Christ, in dying on the Cross, has inaugurated our capacity to love to the end, until death, accepting the limitations of the other person. He gives us his Spirit, the Holy Spirit, his strength, his Love, the divine Life, which enables us to live in accord with our truth: created for love, to love and be loved in fidelity.

Thus He has given us the possibility of uniting ourselves indissolubly with others, of loving faithfully. Because we are called to love eternally.

This Gospel passage does not only speak about marriages; it speaks about all human relationships. There is no relationship that is not called to be transformed by Christ's passion, death and resurrection, with the ability to lose oneself to gain the other, to give life to the other person, to give oneself to the other person in all situations. Above all, when that person is not easy to love.

If I love the other person only when he or she is pleasant and attractive, then I will end up using that person for my own interests. Our greatness begins when we lose ourselves, when, in Christ's name, we enter into the logic of eternity, of self-giving, of surrender.

A relationship begins to be destroyed when imperceptibly but fatally the love in one's heart is killed: the decision to choose love, to choose the other person, to defend and safeguard that person.

The greatest adultery is the betrayal of our ability to love and be loved.

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