

Homily for 27th Sunday

On this twenty seventh Sunday of the church's ordinary time we are invited to reflect intimately on the very essential institutions viz., marriage and family. Both marriage and the family institution are founded on genuine love for the sustenance of humanity. Today, both our first reading and the gospel strongly call us to uphold the sanctity of marriage. Both readings show us that marriage is a gift and act of God that must be cherished and protected. It is important to note therefore that whatever threatens marriage and family life threatens love, unity and in fact human existence. While marriage plays the dual role of affection between couples and, the sustenance of humanity through procreation, the family is in the words of Pope Francis is "the Factory of hope." So today we celebrate our belonging together as a family of God.

Marriage is the union of two families. In marriage, two people with different mental abilities, with different IQ, with different talents come together. It is not an attempt to establish the superiority of one, but rather it is an attempt to complement the other. The problems begin when each thinks that the other is at fault and that the other should change. A judge was interviewing a woman regarding her pending divorce, and asked, what are the grounds for your divorce? She replied, About four acres and a nice little home in the middle of the property with a stream running by. No, he said, I mean what is the foundation of this case? It is made of concrete, brick and mortar, she responded. I mean, he continued, what are your relations like? I have an aunt and uncle living here in town, and so do my husband's parents. He said, Do you have a real grudge? No, she replied, we have a two-car carport and have never really needed one. Please, he tried again, is there any infidelity in your marriage? Yes, both my son and daughter have stereo sets. We don't necessarily like the music, but the answer to your questions is yes. Ma'am, does your husband ever beat you up? Yes, she responded, about twice a week he gets up earlier than I do. Finally, in frustration, the judge asked, Lady, why do you want a divorce? Oh, I don't want a divorce, she replied. I've never wanted a divorce. My husband does. He said he can't communicate with me!. The problems arise due to lack of proper communications and listening. When you talk you are only repeating what you already know. But if you listen, you may learn something new.

The family is our first attempt at learning how love works and how forgiveness works, getting along with others and learning to help and support them, solving problems and taking care of duties for no pay, giving and receiving material things, affection, time, cleaning up after others and learning how to express ourselves clearly and authentically, even doing things without getting credit. All of these skills and experiences are important and used throughout our entire life. I always admire the way the young parents look after their children. The way children communicate. It is amazing. It is when I lost both my parents, the first time since childhood I was vulnerable. This is what Jesus admired in little children, not so much their innocence but their vulnerability. They are dependent upon those around them for help. A frightened child is dependent on a parent to comfort him or her until their fears go away. Adults need, from time to time, to share their troubled thoughts with wife or husband, partner or friend. Dear parents be proud to be a father and a mother. You represent God. May Jesus bless our families and keep them together. So that no one ever be vulnerable.