



The Parish of Saints Anthony & Aloysius

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Homily at Mass 2nd Sunday of Ordinary Time, Year C – 20 January 2019

“There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee”. St John’s account of the wedding at Cana is well known to all of us. From time to time a young couple will choose this story to be read at their own wedding. They want Christ to be there with them as they make their wedding vows and begin to live married life. They want Christ to bless their love, and to strengthen their promises, then resolve, their commitment as they begin the long journey of marriage and family life together. They want Christ to renew his miracle in their lives: transforming the pure water of their human love into the good wine of love touched and transformed by God’s healing and uplifting grace.

The Church speaks of Christian marriage as one of 2 sacraments at the service of communion, one of 2 sacraments that give life to the community life we share together in the family of God. The other sacrament is, of course, the sacrament of Holy Orders – the ministry among us of bishops, priests and deacons. We speak of our priests and bishops as shepherds, pastors – we look to them to lead us, teach us, to celebrate the sacraments for us, especially Sunday Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Through the ministry of bishops and priests we see Christ active among us, serving us, encouraging us, accompanying us on this life’s pilgrimage; by definition a priest is a minister of sacrifice as well as a mediator, an intercessor, an agent of God’s grace, mercy, healing, love. We speak of our bishops and priests as fathers because we understand the Church to be first of all, most of all, best of all, a family – the Family of God.

The Sacrament of Marriage is also a sacrament at the service of Communion Christian Marriage images the relationship between Christ and his bride the Church. What a beautiful thought that is – that the Church is a bride: lovely, radiant, beautiful. A bride, the Church is also our mother – the Fathers of the Church often speak of the baptismal font as the womb of the Church which gives birth to new sons and daughters of God. Christ is the bridegroom: strong, protective, faithful. At Sunday Mass we see the meeting of Bridegroom and Bride – the Church gathers us her children, our faces radiant with the joy of Sunday, our hearts confident in prayer, our lives complete because Christ our friend and Lord is with us. Christ speaks to us as his Word is read to us. Christ makes us one with him and one another in his sacrifice at the Altar and the Eucharist his gift, himself.

The Church’s vision of Marriage is a great ideal, but not impossible. Married life calls for daily effort, it can be a struggle sometimes, Christian marriage needs everything that God wants to offer not only on the wedding day but every day a man and woman strive to live out the commitment to love and honour each other in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, until death. Government and society have a responsibility to protect and uphold marriage and family life because this is the bedrock of the life of the nation. This is not

necessarily the air that we breathe in modern Australia. So it falls to the Church to continue to propose the truth about marriage and its high ideals. The Church loves and values marriage and family life; for us children are a blessing; the Church speaks of the Christian family as the “domestic Church”: it’s at home that we learn from mum and dad, and from the interactions of children with each other, parents and children living and growing together, as well as the irreplaceable wisdom of grandparents. We learn how to pray, how to give, how to be generous, how to look out for on another, how to share, how to encourage, how to become a good man and a good woman.

In the family of the Church, our Holy Father Pope Francis offer this encouragement to every family:

- To know how to forgive and to feel forgiven is a basic experience in family life.
- Everyday the family has to come up with new ways of appreciating and acknowledging its members.
- No family drops down from heaven perfectly formed; families need constantly to grow and mature in the ability to love.
- Many men are conscious of the importance of their role in the family and live their masculinity accordingly. The absence of a father gravely affects family life and the upbringing of children and their integration into society. This absence, which may be physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual, deprives children of a suitable father figure.
- Pregnancy is a difficult but wonderful time. A mother joins with God to bring forth the miracle of a new life.
- With great affection I urge all future mothers: keep happy and let nothing rob you of the interior joy of motherhood. Your child deserves your happiness. Don’t let fears, worries, other peoples comments or problems lessen your joy at being God’s means of bringing a new life into the world.
- You can’t have a family without dreams. Once a family loses the ability to dream, children do not grow, love does not grow, life shrivels up and dies.
- It helps to break the routine with a party, and to enjoy family celebrations of anniversaries and special events. We need these moments of cherishing God’s gifts and renewing our zest for life. As long as we can celebrate, we are able to rekindle our love, to free it from monotony and to colour our daily routine with hope.
- The Lord’s presence dwells in real and concrete families, with all their daily troubles and struggles, joys and hopes. Living in a family makes it hard for us to feign or lie; we cannot hide behind a mask. If that authenticity is inspired by love, then the Lord reigns there, with his joy and his peace. The spirituality of family love is made up of thousands of small but real gestures.

Amoris Laetitia (2017)