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| 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time |
| Genesis 2:18-24 |
| Hebrews 2:19-11 |
| Mark 10:2-16 |

**A. Text/Context**

* One of the dirty tactics that the Pharisees employ in order to trap Jesus is to ask the legality of a certain law. If they will find Jesus wrong in his answers they will condemn him
* Jesus is a teacher, and as a teacher, and as a faithful Jew he is expected to know not only the basic tenets of Judaism but also all the laws that govern the same religion
* Here in the gospel, the Pharisees are asking Jesus: Is it lawful for a husband to divorce his wife? Is it lawful for a husband? It does not say or mention about the wife
* We have to bear in mind that Jewish Culture specifically does not reserve the right to a woman to write a letter of divorce to her husband. It is culturally improper for a woman to do that. Only a man can initiate divorce
* Jesus would vindicate the right of a woman later at the end of the gospel by saying to his disciples that: Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and if a woman divorces her husband and marries another she commits adultery. This time the woman is included
* With such answer, Jesus has already laid the foundations on the issue of gender sensitivity even during his time
* And going back to the question of the Pharisees, Jesus throws back the question to them. Apparently, the Pharisees already knew the answer and it is now very clear that what God has joined together should not be separated, and this is the law of God
* Quoting Genesis, divorce was only allowed by Moses because of their stubbornness, because of their hard-headedness, because they cannot be faithful to their partners in marriage, because they cannot be true to their promises of love and care both in times of joy and sorrow within marriage

**B. Human Situation**

* The Catholic Church has always been consistent on its stand on the issue of divorce since time immemorial
* The prohibition of divorce ensures a safety net that protects the dignity of the sacrament of marriage and the family
* This is to discourage couples who even within marriage could still fall for another man or woman other than their husband or wife out of human weakness
* This is to keep them from changing partners at will rather than stick to one through thick and thin
* This is also to protect the children from harm and danger who will be the innocent victims of a marital fallout, the pains of separation that certainly shatters the stability of a home
* The prohibition of divorce is actually a protection for married couples against human weakness in order to maintain the sanctity of marriage and the family
* The Church knows very well and it anticipates that if divorce be allowed, hell can surely break loose because there will always be abuses and excesses of it as western societies have already taught us
* A woman marrying a man for the sake of his millions and security, a man marrying a woman for the sake of her fame and influence, then divorce him or her after a year, a month, a week, or even days after marriage to find a more attractive partner or perhaps a richer partner
* In Juarez, El Paso, Mexico, you are married today, the next day you are free. The famous Mexican divorce
* Marriage has become a game of luck. You marry and marry again, you divorce and divorce again and try a lot more until you win the jackpot
* Where is now the sanctity of marriage? Where is its very purpose of union and love and companionship in procreation in order to generate children to ensure the continuity of the human race?
* Of course, the Church understands that a lot of marriages simply just do not work
* A battered wife of a violent husband cannot just stay forever bruised in her entire life!
* A tortured husband cannot stay forever joined to an irresponsible and nagging wife!
* Situations like these could turn a home into a hotbed of hate and anger. This is unfortunate and the Church understands this and all other similar situations that exist in a home
* That is why there is also a leeway in it and the Church allows annulment exercising utmost prudence in its judgment
* Divorce is legal separation, annulment means there has never been any marriage from the very beginning because of the presence of impediments
* That is why the period of courtship is very important so that a man and a woman could find the right partner that he or she will have to live with and contend with in the entirety of their life. And this requires prayer and reflection and long periods of discernment
* Divorce will be out of the question if the man and the woman finds the right partner
* Today however, the issue of divorce is watered down because sex is no longer done within the confines of marriage
* This is because of the prevailing principles in philosophy that give so much emphasis on the self, on the freedom and liberty of the individual
* This is the right to pleasure in its maximum. We now live in a hedonistic society where the only thing that counts is pleasure
* Why do you need a divorce when sex can be as easy as buying medicines in the counter?
* Sexual promiscuity necessitates abortion because the partners are not ready for responsibility. It is simply sex for pleasure with the absence of responsibility. Sexual promiscuity is freedom from responsibility
* And abortion is the necessary consequence because partners are not ready for the gift of life, the door to new life is shut off even before it develops
* So you see, with sexual promiscuity human beings could not even be conceived, and if they are, they are terminated. This is plain selfishness because it blocks access to the gift of life to the unborn
* Of course promiscuity already includes the spread of diseases previously unknown to the human race

**C. Challenge**

* All the Christians of the world are called to fidelity and faithfulness to the Lord. And this fidelity finds its expression through the faithfulness that a husband and a wife do within marriage
* The gospel today is calling all of us to be faithful to ourselves, to be pure, to be prudent in matters of sexual relationships
* We are all challenged to the call of sexual fidelity, married or single, male or female
* Our foremost example is the holy family Jesus, Mary and Joseph who remained pure and holy not only in body but also in mind, heart, and soul
* The beauty of fidelity surpasses all the beauty in the world because fidelity is the beauty of our soul that shines before the eyes of God