

13. August 2021

**“The Bond of Marriage”
Part 1**

Mt 19:3-12

'Some Pharisees approached him, and to put him to the test they said, 'Is it against the Law for a man to divorce his wife on any pretext whatever?' He answered, 'Have you not read that the Creator from the beginning made them male and female and that he said: This is why a man leaves his father and mother and becomes attached to his wife, and the two become one flesh? They are no longer two, therefore, but one flesh. So then, what God has united, human beings must not divide.' They said to him, 'Then why did Moses command that a writ of dismissal should be given in cases of divorce?' He said to them, 'It was because you were so hard-hearted, that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but it was not like this from the beginning. Now I say this to you: anyone who divorces his wife - I am not speaking of an illicit marriage - and marries another, is guilty of adultery. 'The disciples said to him, 'If that is how things are between husband and wife, it is advisable not to marry.' But he replied, 'It is not everyone who can accept what I have said, but only those to whom it is granted. There are eunuchs born so from their mother's womb, there are eunuchs made so by human agency and there are eunuchs who have made themselves so for the sake of the kingdom of Heaven. Let anyone accept this who can.'

For the sake of the importance of today's theme, I have planned two reflections before we look - if God gives us the grace - on three consecutive days at the Blessed Mother Mary, who was so graced by God.

The text of today's Gospel is also very topical today and leads us into the context of the current debate on how the Church should deal with those people who have entered into a second intimate union, even though the sacramental marriage still exists.

First of all, the primary orientation for the right path is always the word of Jesus himself! This leaves no doubt that with the coming of the Lord the original intention of God with the union of man and woman shall be restored! Even if God allowed a divorce temporarily - for the reason of the hard-heartedness of the man - this was not his original will! The church has taken up this word of the Lord as a binding

instruction. The reasoning of the Lord is clear! It follows from God's will of creation that man and woman are ordered to each other and become one flesh in their union! But if man and woman have become one, then a second union cannot be "one flesh" at the same time, as long as the bond of the first marriage is valid! It is possible to be "of one spirit" with many people, but not "of one flesh".

This points emphatically to the special nature of marriage, which is unmistakable because it represents a body-soul union, from which new life can arise! From this consideration it becomes understandable why, for example, a lived homosexual union cannot be a marriage, as some would like to see it today. But already from this fundamental point of view, efforts in this regard are misguided, apart from the fact that no children can be born from such a union.

The high good of marriage, which for us Catholics is indissoluble, must be protected, since it is the natural nucleus of the human family and in its existence a testimony to the love of God.

We know that marriage and family are exposed to many attacks, especially in our times, and that despite the grace of the marital sacrament, there can be great difficulties in living together. Therefore, ways must be sought again and again to overcome these difficulties. If, despite all efforts, living together becomes subjectively unbearable for some people at a certain point, a (temporary) separation from table and bed is a possibility - albeit a painful one - to ease a constant tension. In the physical distance, it may become possible to look in the Lord at the constant points of friction and do what is in oneself to make peace. A prudent pastoral accompaniment can do much good here and perhaps help to initiate a healing process or to give assistance in overcoming the difficulties: The marriage bond remains in such a separation and from an unresolved problem does not arise the right, for example, to enter into a new intimate relationship, which could offer itself like a consolation.

Will be continued!