

2ND Sunday in Ordinary Time Cycle C – January 17, 2010

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I have been greatly alarmed lately by the national discussion of what constitutes a marriage and who can be considered married. This specific ceremony has been under attack for the past 30 years or so, especially in the United States - but recently it has come under a more aggressive fight. This battle is really a fundamental societal battle and that fact seems to go unnoticed by many. Marriage is the initiation of the most fundamental building block of society the Family. And as with any structure, the wrong type of building block will weaken it. What is more disturbing is that there are quite a few 'Christian believers' that think those ideas which hold to the God given definition of marriage, which includes the Catholic Church's teachings, are at best misguided. There is no love in our teaching of what marriage is. Amazing!

To me - it is interesting to notice where Jesus began his public ministry – at a wedding. John Paul the Great said about our Gospel reading today: *“from the words of the evangelist we can see that this episode in particular determined the beginning of his apostolic life”*. It was a wedding where the Lord began his work, his miracles.

Jesus starts at the beginning. It is Matrimony that marks a start, a new beginning every time. Man and woman come together and start a new community with the title 'family'. The husband and wife leave the old communities that they were accustomed to – come together and start anew a community of love and life.

This is where the survival of mankind rests. The marriage between a man and a woman with the openness to a family is where God entrusts the mystery of human life; where he entrusts the transmission of the truth, the handing on of faith. Not just the creation of new life – but the total nourishing of that life, physical, mental, spiritual. What the husband gives to his wife, and to their children is deepened by what the wife gives to her husband and their children. It is through the family that relationships grow, respect is fostered, self-giving love is shared. It is through the marital act and its consequences, the openness to a growing family, that true, pure love is experienced because this love is totally opened to God. It is the love of a husband and wife, love given freely, given totally, open towards each other without thought of self where we come to understand what God is truly about. A love that says to each other I am yours come whatever may, anything that comes from our love, will be a blessing. Because it is how God loves – totally receptive - nothing withheld. This love between a husband and wife is a love that is witnessed by their children which in turn allows them to grow in the same love and love others as well.

This is what God intended and societies need to survive. Now, of course, there are times when this God intended definition of family is missing. Single parents, or childless couples still live in the guidance of God's plan and with the blessing of the grace of God. God loves all – and that love can be seen in these families as well. We are all precious in the eyes of our creator. But it is to God's plan that society as a whole needs to look to survive.

Jesus, started His ministry at this beginning, where each member of society starts; He reinforced its importance as the foundational event in society by His participating in it along with his mother - and by sharing it with His apostles – by performing his first public miracle there and sanctifying it.

But this wedding at Cana also shows us that this fundamental, foundational building block of society needs to include Jesus as well. If the family doesn't have Jesus invited to participate then chances of problems increase; as with this wedding at Cana, where the event was in trouble, because they had run out of wine. Our families too run into some very difficult times – relationships can be stretched and grow weak. But with Christ in our families, allowed to truly participate, love grows and becomes better. What was grand and glorious from the start grows into a better vintage and becomes richer, deeper.

So to those 'Christian-believers' who think there is no love in our teaching on marriage. I ask them to relook, rethink, and pray to the God (who is love himself) because it was He who gave us this plan.