

Ordinary 27B - 2021

In search of a perfect woman to marry:

One afternoon, according to an old Sufi tale, a man named Nasiruddin was sitting in a cafe, drinking tea with a friend and talking about life and love. "How come you never got married, Nasruddin?" asked his friend at one point. "Well," said Nasruddin, "to tell you the truth, I spent my youth looking for the perfect woman. In Cairo, I met a beautiful and intelligent woman, with eyes like dark olives, but she was unkind. Then in Baghdad, I met a woman who was a wonderful and generous soul, but we had no interests in common. One woman after another would seem just right, but there would always be something missing. Then one day, I met her. She was beautiful, intelligent, generous and kind. We had everything in common. In fact, she was perfect."

"Well," said Nasruddin's friend, "what happened? Why didn't you marry her?" Nasruddin sipped his tea reflectively. "Well," he replied. "It's a sad thing; seems she was looking for the perfect man." — In today's Gospel Jesus reminds us that an imperfect man has no right to divorce his equally imperfect wife whom God has given him as His perfect gift. Fr. Tony (<https://frtonyshomilies.com/>).

Two Schools of Thought on Divorce:

There were two schools of thought in Jesus' day concerning divorce, one liberal and one conservative. Rabbi Shammai taught that divorce was only permissible on the grounds of some sexual impropriety. His was the stricter view. Rabbi Hillel, on the other hand, had a more liberal view and taught that a man could divorce his wife for any reason. If she burned his breakfast, put too much salt on his food, showed disrespect to him, spoke disrespectfully of her husband's parents in his presence, spoke to a man on the street, or even let her hair down in public, he could divorce her. The view of Rabbi Hillel was the view that was popular in Jesus' day. So divorce was common in Palestine, and in this respect the setting was not unlike our own. Perhaps the most significant difference between their customs and ours lay in the status of the different genders. A man could divorce a woman on a whim, but a woman could not divorce a man for any cause. The Old Testament contains a highly patriarchal position that viewed a woman's sexual immorality more as property damage against her husband (or her father) rather than as a moral issue.

A double standard shines throughout the Old Testament, where it was not uncommon for the male rulers to have many wives and hundreds of concubines. If you look carefully at the question of the Pharisees, you will find no concern whatsoever about a woman's rights in marriage or divorce. "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" (by Mickey Anders from *Making Marriage Work*)

We Trust Them with the Children, Don't We?

A new principal was checking over his school on the first day. Passing the stockroom, he was startled to see the door wide open and teachers going in and out, carrying off books and supplies. The school he came from had a check-out system that required the teachers to indicate what supplies they had obtained. Curious about the practice here he asked the school custodian, "Do you think it's wise to keep the stockroom unlocked and to let the teachers take things without asking?" The custodian responded, "We trust them with the children, don't we?"

Jesus wants us to trust in him and let the child within to be free. It is the only way to receive the kingdom of God. He wants us to give the child within the freedom to express itself, being creative, having fun and sharing emotions and feelings. He wants us to accept others who are different realizing that God makes us all and wants us to be genuine, authentic human beings. The end result is absolute joy and the opportunity to experience life in its fullest. (by Keith Wagner from *The Child Within*)

Old Love:

The question is asked, "Is there anything more beautiful in life than a boy and a girl clasping clean hands and pure hearts in the path of marriage? Can there be any thing more beautiful than young love?"

And the answer is given. "Yes, there is a more beautiful thing. It is the spectacle of an old man and an old woman finishing their journey together on that path. Their hands are gnarled, but still clasped; their faces are seamed but still radiant; their hearts are physically bowed and tired, but still strong with love and devotion for one another. Yes, there is a more beautiful thing than young love. Old love." (*Anonymous; quoted by Fr. Botelho*). Fr. Tony