



# Bringing Home the Word

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (C)

January 16, 2022

## The Many-Threaded Tapestry That Is Marriage

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

A tapestry weaver works from the back side of the fabric while looking into a mirror to see the reflection of his work. Next to the mirror sits a painting of what he is weaving. The back of the tapestry is full of knots and dull colors. In front it is beautiful and ornate. The way a tapestry is made is a great allegory for marriage. Spouses look at the ideal they are trying to reproduce: God's love for humanity, Jesus' love for

his Church. It is a sacrificial, lay-down-your-life kind of love. While viewing the ideal, the spouses have their hands on the threads, weaving the right color at the right time to reproduce that ideal.

Those strings can represent the different virtues or acts of love required by the specific situation of the relationship. Sometimes a spouse has to stop, tie off a string, pull it out, and start over. From the back, it can look chaotic, but slowly the ideal takes shape and the beauty of the tapestry of marriage comes into view.

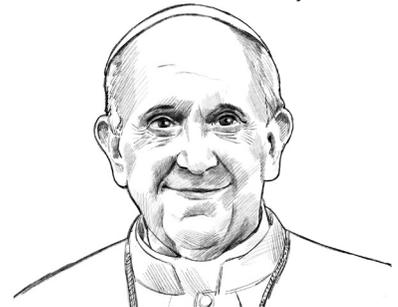
God will marry us, says the prophet. He will take us as his own, giving us the gifts of his Spirit to enrich us. Together, we will bear fruit of new life in ourselves and others. Trying to weave that loving union with God and others may be chaotic and knotty; thus, the need to repent and try again. But with his grace, the final product, which comes into full view only at the end, will be unique and beautiful. +

*It can look chaotic, but  
slowly the ideal takes shape  
and the beauty of the marriage  
tapestry comes into view.*

### A Word from Pope Francis

We go to Mass because we are sinners and we want to receive God's pardon, to participate in the redemption of Jesus, in his forgiveness. The confession which we make at the beginning is not pro forma. It is a real act of repentance! I am a sinner and I confess it—this is how the Mass begins!

—General Audience,  
February 12, 2014



## Sunday Readings

### Isaiah 62:1-5

As a bridegroom rejoices in his  
bride /  
so shall your God rejoice in you.

### 1 Corinthians 12:4-11

There are different kinds of spiritual  
gifts but the same Spirit; /  
there are different forms of service  
but the same Lord.

### John 2:1-11

[Jesus said,] "Everyone serves good  
wine first, and then when people  
have drunk freely, an inferior one;  
but you have kept the good wine  
until now."

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

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- Is God's love the ideal I try to emulate in my relationships, especially marriage?
- God is the main protagonist in my relationships. Do I try to listen to his inspirations?

# Measuring God's Love

By Kathleen M. Basi

Anyone who has suffered loss—death, miscarriage, infertility, unemployment, natural disaster—can list the well-meaning yet deeply hurtful things people say. Most of them invoke God: God doesn't give you anything you can't handle. God's will is perfect. And so on.

You can't argue with statements like these, but they can be damaging. They set up God as the cause of one's suffering, which can isolate a person from the very grace he or she most needs: the certainty of God's love.

Perhaps it's human nature. When we lack easy answers, we blame the divine. When a storm decimates a town, it's punishment for human wickedness. If we escape harm, it's a personal blessing. When we're diagnosed with major illness, it's because God is testing us; when the biopsy comes up negative, it's a sign of his favor.

In short, we sometimes treat God as if he's sitting on his heavenly sofa, hitting the "fire" button on some celestial Xbox controller.

The trouble is, if everything is God's fault, then when someone walks into a nightclub and starts shooting or when civil war spirals into war crimes perpetrated by all sides of the conflict, forcing millions to flee, some people will view it as proof that God doesn't exist at all. What loving God could possibly allow such things to happen?



Of course, God didn't have a thing to do with the horror in Syria or the nightclub shooting in Florida. That's on us—on fallen, broken humanity.

Bad things happen because we live in a fallen world. People who have been formed by prejudice and raised in an atmosphere of violence may do things that average sinners like us can't fathom. Yet it's still sin, not God, that bears the responsibility.

Nor should we blame God's wrath when extreme weather events cause great suffering and destruction. Instead, we should examine our own behaviors, looking for ways in which consumption and pollution are damaging the balance of nature.

God's love is not measured by physical bounty or beneficence. Neither should we view misfortune or loss as a sign of his displeasure. God's love is evident in the beauty of this world; in the incredible goodness of humanity—the goodness we are capable of when we remember that we are made in his image. Most of all, it's measured by the cross and the resurrection.

When we encounter the pain of others, it may be hard to know what to say. Sometimes it's better to say nothing at all—to offer a hug, a listening ear, and service. Then, perhaps, those who suffer will know the love of God because they have felt it—through us. +

***God's love is not measured  
by physical bounty  
or beneficence.***



***Lord, send your Spirit and  
empower me to use my gifts and  
talents for the common good  
of all people.***

—From *Peaceful Meditations for Every Day  
in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage  
and Mary Ann McSweeney

## WEEKDAY READINGS

January 17–22

**Monday, St. Anthony:**

1 Sm 15:16–23/ Mk 2:18–22

**Tuesday, Weekday:** 1 Sm 16:1–13 /

Mk 2:23–28 / Lk 4:31–37

**Wednesday, Weekday:**

1 Sm 17:32–33, 37, 40–51/ Mk 3:1–6

**Thursday, Weekday:**

1 Sm 18:6–9; 19:1–7 / Mk 3:7–12

**Friday, St. Agnes:**

1 Sm 24:3–21 / Mk 3:13–19

**Saturday, Day of Prayer for the Legal  
Protection of Unborn Children:**

2 Sm 1:1–4, 11–12, 19, 23–27 / Mk 3:20–21

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