

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost - 2015

Father. Forgive me my sins, for they are many. Lord God, who sent thy well beloved son to die on the cross and be raised from the dead to become the perfect sacrifice for the atonement of our sins, forgive my sins. Father forgive me my sins so that I can dream of eternal life.

We read in the Gospel that Jesus said "From the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and Mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh.. Therefore what God has joined together, let no man separate.

Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery"

In 1978, Jean and I became engaged to be married. We were deeply in love then as we are still today. We had one problem. I had been married before.

Jean wanted us to be married in the Catholic Church. I was OK with that – I was in my un-Churched period then. But it wasn't going to happen, I had been married before: end of story.

So I called the Episcopal Church I drove by on the way to and from work every day. I think I spoke with Father Burden, who told me that I would have to have my first marriage annulled. I asked him what that meant and he told me I would have to prove that the first marriage was never consummated or that there had never been any intent to have children. He also said it was quite expensive. I thanked him for the information and gave up on the Episcopal Church.

It wasn't the best of times. Our love was sorely tested.

Ultimately, we found a Lutheran Minister in Batavia, who would marry us. We went through pre-marital counseling. We met with the Priest. We picked out the lessons and the Gospel we wanted read, the hymns, details, details. All was good.

The day arrived, the ceremony began and the Priest read the Gospel reading from today. As you can imagine, when he got to the adultery line, I was beet red and sweating like a fool. The Priest didn't come to the reception afterwards; I was happy about that. Three months later, we heard that the Priest had run off with the Church lady.

So, when I looked up the readings for this day, memories of that blush and sweat flooded my mind. What to talk about? I could focus on the little children. I could go back and talk about Job.

I could not have a homily at all. But then I thought of Job's words, "Shall we receive the good at the hand of God, and not receive the bad?"

The Pope came to America. The Liberals cheered when he spoke of our sacred obligation to preserve and nurture our planet earth, that climate change is real. The conservatives cheered when he spoke of the sanctity of marriage and family values. The pope met privately with an openly Gay and partnered Catholic. He also met privately with Kim Davis, the elected official who refuses to issue marriage certificates to Gay and Lesbian Couples. He is convening a synod on issues facing contemporary Catholic Families; birth control, divorce, who and who cannot receive communion, and others - difficult issues, one and all.

He was assailed from all sides by people seeking answers: answers to questions of faith and answers to fulfill political gain. Questioners much like the ones that Pharisees' confronted Jesus with.

I am glad I didn't live back in the first century. By definition, I did commit adultery. The punishment back then for adultery was death. OOPS.

So, I Have sinned. And, in reality this sin of adultery isn't my only sin, nor probably even my worst sin. Jean and I are in our 38th year of marriage, so maybe I've worked off some of that sin. We all sin. We sin in thought, word and deed, by things done and things left undone. We try to be better, to sin less, to love more, to follow the golden rule. But we fail. Not all the time, but some of the time. When the Pope met the Speaker of the House, John Boehner, he said, "Pray for me." He said the same to the Gay man who has been his longtime friend, he said it again when he met with Kim Davis.

"Pray for me" Father. Forgive me my sins, for they are many. Lord God who sent thy well beloved son to die on the cross and be raised from the dead to become the perfect sacrifice for the atonement of all of our sins, forgive my sins. Father forgive me my sins so that I can dream of eternal life.

Amen

Rob Borchert
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