

## Two Become One series 4

Month number four. First we learned that we were created for joy. Then we heard that love is our mission and that God will not abandon the people that he has made a covenant with. Last month I tried my best to express how sacred creation is. That there is divine purpose for our bodies. That our sexuality is precious and holds great worth.

This month we look into the idea of “Two Become One”- and how fitting is it that spring is at our door step and it is wedding season time. Many moms and daughters, sisters and friends are consumed with the tasks of this season. Searching for that perfect dress. Booking the hall, the church. What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear? Sheet cakes or cupcakes? DJ or Band? The list goes on and on. The planning for such an event is daunting.

But when the bouquet is tossed and the last guest is thanked what do you do now? For many young couples this question is hard to answer. So much importance is placed on that one day. But that one day is just the starting point for a lifetime commitment.

Isn't it interesting that the flawed world that we live in has hundreds of TV shows that celebrate finding a dress and then saying yes to that garment? They exploit crazy over the top one day celebrations and label girls bridezillas. Only to skip to the inevitable messy end; full of tears, anger and misunderstanding.

Where do we see the examples of loving through the tough times? Where do we see examples of truth and honesty in intimacy? Where do we see complete fulfillment in one person for the rest of your life. Where do we see the meaning of our existence being mapped out on another's heart?

We see the right examples in our creator and the covenant that he has made with us. Understanding that to love and be loved is our destiny wrapped in the eternal plan from our maker.

The Church promises that marriage is a sacrament. The Catechism of the Catholic Church promises that in the Sacrament of Marriage, Christ dwells with the couple, helping spouses to pick up their cross, “to rise

again after they have fallen,” to forgive and bear one another’s burdens. Catholic marriage makes real the grace that sustains us for all time.

As Pope Francis puts it: “The Sacrament of Marriage...takes place in the simplicity and also the fragility of the human condition. We know the many trials and difficulties that the lives of a married couple encounter...the important thing is to keep alive the link with God, which is the basis of the marital bond”

Another point that Pope Francis makes is, and I quote, “living together is an art...which can be summarized in [a few simple] words; please, thank you and sorry.” Marriages can turn very painful, very fast, when these simple words are missing.

When those painful times arise some turn towards scripture, and we have heard:

“Love is patient, love is kind, love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrong doing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. “1 Corinthians 13: 4-7:

Many of you have heard this verse as a reading at weddings. It is very popular- it gives the reader a pretty straight forward blueprint of what love is and what it is not. So read this and you are set. Right?

I know that the majority of those here would agree that living and loving like this is not easy. It takes a good amount of work and commitment to love this way. Marital love needs to be built on more than just romance.

The catechism for the Meeting of Families goes on to explain that,... “a person tied too tightly to romantic expectations, without the leaven of interior freedom and the capacity of self-gift, will lack flexibility. To live the sacramentality of marriage and to follow the way of the covenant, husbands and wives need the capacity to transcend resentment, to lay aside entitlements, and to step forward in generosity. Without interior freedom and power, serious problems are bound to arise, because life puts husbands and wives in situations that are often not romantic at all.”

Last month I mentioned learning about the great work of Saint John Paul the Second. This work called Theology of the Body, is more than just a holy version of the birds and the bees talk. John Paul speaks on that “interior freedom” and “self-mastery” (or being able to give of self). These two skills need to be learned through Christ’s example, nurtured through scripture and sustained with prayer. Married people need these virtues in order to truly make a gift of themselves to one another.

I would like to share some excerpts from the catechism for the World Meeting of Families. I believe this helps give light to those examples that we search for, those examples of true love and marriage.

“To train our hearts for marriage, we need to practice in interior freedom, the practice of seeing our sexuality in the context of communion and the holiness of each other’s personhood.”

“In the Sacrament of Marriage, God’s covenant is made visible, the covenant’s grace is communicated and shared. In the Sacrament of Marriage, God’s covenant enters our homes and becomes the foundations of our families.”

“We don’t make sense by ourselves. Man was not made to be alone. Instinctually we seek others out. There is a longing to bond with others.”

I would like to conclude with a teaching from Pope Francis and he has said;

“Matrimony is [a] work of every day; I could say a craftwork, a goldsmith’s work, because the husband has the task to make his wife more woman, and the wife has the task to make her husband more man. To grow also in humanity, as man and woman. And this is done between you. It is called growing together. This doesn’t come from the air! The Lord blesses it, but it comes from your hands, from your attitudes, from your way of living, from your way of loving one another. Make yourselves grow! Always act so that the other grows.”

By: Shannon Holthaus