



Diocese of
Palmerston North

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Parish

Palmerston North (1951)

Te Pariha o to mātou Wahine o Ruata



Priest Ministers

Fr Joe Grayland (Pastor)
Fr Peter Carde SM
Fr Kevin Neal
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LOLO MASSES

5:30pm Vigil (Saturday)
9:30am Sunday
Mon Liturgy of Word & Communion
Tues—Sat 10:00am

SACRED HEART RONGOTEA

9:00am: 1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays

ST MARY'S FOXTON MASSES

10:30am Sun
10:30am Thurs

ST JOSEPH'S SHANNON MASSES

9:00am 1st, 3rd & 5th Sundays

RECONCILIATION

Sat 10:30am—11:00am
and on request

EUCCHARIST ADORATION

Fri: 10:30am—Noon
7:00pm—9:00pm

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time—7th October 2018; Year B / Weekdays Year 2

Kia ora tātou,

Recently the priests of New Zealand gathered for a five-yearly national week of professional development.

Shocking sexual abuse stories which have filled the media were the backdrop to that gathering. One of the speakers linked abuse to clericalism; priests on pedestals lording it over others.

Some people have asked me: what are you doing about all this? It's a question that takes time to answer yet some expect an instant answer. Steps are what is important.

Part of my personal response is in fact a kind of silence. What can I say? It's a silence not of inertia but of shame; a silence of humility but also the silence of reflection and action.

I have written something for WelCom which is being distributed in parishes today. I've placed that on our website too. I'm also a member of the Church's tautoko or support group for the Royal Commission into historical sexual abuse. We have met four times. We have urged the Prime Minister and others to broaden the terms of reference of the Inquiry so that no voice or institution is left on the side-line.

Just this week I was in the home of a sexual abuse survivor, listening. Soon I hope to support him in another forum. Perhaps most of all, I am more than ever acutely aware of any patronising talk, off-pat answers, hollow moralising, my own sinfulness, and ugly clericalism. I have talked and written to all our priests about this.

Governance and leadership in our Church must change.

Pope Francis has introduced to the Church – us – not primarily a theological reform but a reform of the heart. His is a language of accompaniment and nurture and purpose. Please read my piece in WelCom. It was written out of a spirit of frustration. But I know too that the Holy Spirit is calling us to who we should always have been: a people of mercy, forgiveness, and healing; listeners ready to root out evil and foster all that is good

+ Charles



Venerable Suzanne Aubert's Celebration Day Today, Sunday, 7th October

The annual Suzanne Aubert Celebration Sunday is a day for all Catholics to celebrate and remember the spirituality and good works of this remarkable woman and to be inspired by what she achieved and to following her footsteps. Please continue to pray that the church will soon recognize Venerable Suzanne Aubert's intercession in a miracle which enables her to be beatified.

Catechumenate for children at OLOL each second Sunday following the 9.30am Mass. We will be gathering after Mass today, 7th, then again on 21st October.

Congratulations to Vui Hoang on his ordination to the diaconate for this Diocese, in Auckland last weekend.

Passionist Family Groups in Aotearoa – 30 year celebration Future, current and past PFG members are invited to celebrate 30 years of PFG on **Saturday 13th October, 2018**. Starting with 5.30pm Mass, followed by shared pot luck dinner in Our Lady of Lourdes Church Hall (Shamrock St, PN). RSVP and questions to Jenny & Stuart Doidge, PFG Regional Coordinators 0274187906; doidgefamily@xtra.co.nz

LOLO Liturgy Committee meeting is on Tuesday 9 October @ 5.15pm. We might go a little over the hour with this one as we need to start planning for the Christmas liturgies.

- **Readings Oct 14th: Wis 7:7-11; Heb 4:12-13; Mk 10:17-30**

ROSTERS: October 8th—14th

Church Cleaning: Pat Curran and Prue Smith. **Counting:** Leigh Basile.

Greeters: Vigil 5:30pm Catherine and Tom Edwards 9:30am Ans Haakman.

Readers: 5:30pm Dot Bowe, Judith Wall, Rob Towers

9:30am Clare Cole, Janey Bishop, Erica Ramirez.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion: 5:30pm John Lynch, Cecily

Finucane, Hannah Brown, Denis Jones, Denise Bailey

9:30am Denis & Margaret Beckett, Stephen Guy, Martin Boyle, Brendon O'Connor.

Flowers: Ann O'Hara and Judy Walker.

Altar Servers: 9:30am John Garrovillo and Raphael.

Children's Liturgy: School Holidays.

Hospitality: 9:30am Rose & Wally Semmens.

Religious Goods/Library: Anne O'Hara.

Lawns: (Oct 13th) Fr Joe. **Linen:** (October) Mary O'Connor.

We Pray for the Sick: Dan O'Donoghue, Fr Tom O'Connor sm, William Harrison, Fred Winter, Ray Toy, Sheila Evans, Fr Joe O'Sullivan, Philippa Frost, Mark Richards, Trevor Wilson, Tony Keenan, Gary Meyer, Bridget Dorn, Barbara and Graeme Younger, Michael Eades, Vinnie Carroll, Joan Lambourne, Evie Feierabend, Mary Jefferies, Marie Hubbard, Mikulas Oros, Ann Fairclough, Louis Heynen, Braxton Prentice, Katherine Denby, Anne & Bill Bethune, Toshi Sekizaki, Oliver Gillespie, Guiseppina Dujany, Siobhan Thomson.

From the Pastor's Desk

The question of divorce raised in today's Gospel is a complex one and it should not be lightly dealt with. The context for the question is as important as the answer. Together they frame our response to the Gospel in the reality of our life, today. The question of divorce is one that is present in most families, certainly in mine, so I approach it with the knowledge that I talk about the people I love.

The Context:

Jesus is approached by lawyers who want to trap him, not by a couple seeking a solution to their marriage problems. The lawyers ask the legal question: "is it lawful for a husband to divorce his wife?" It is formulated as if a "yes" or "no" answer is enough when the question is too complex for simplistic answers. Two schools of theology were at play here, both using the ancient prescript of Deuteronomy (24:1) as their source document. The lawyers reference their question and the concept of divorce to Deuteronomy 24: 1, however, the word divorce today doesn't capture the notion of *apolyein* in Deuteronomy, neither does it capture the experience of divorce for woman before and during the time of Jesus.

Moreover, Jesus is in Judea (Mark 10:1) where John the Baptist was beheaded by Herod for reproaching him for divorcing his wife and then living with his brother's wife (Mark 6:17-29). To agree with one school of thought, or the other, would mean supporting, or disavowing John and potentially supporting Herod's vindictiveness. Therefore Jesus asks the questioners to state their own position, so that it becomes a specific conversation.

For us, divorce is morally neutral. It is a necessity of law to ensure that a person's civil rights (man or woman) to income, title and reputation are upheld and that the children of divorced spouses are cared for. In the time of Jesus, and before, divorce was not the result of a mutual decision or the result of a legal process in the same way.

A husband was permitted to divorce his wife, but the wife was forbidden to divorce her husband. A husband declared himself divorced from his wife and gave her a letter of divorce which enabled her to marry again with freedom. The nature of divorce was also a tool of the subjugation of women.

Divorce and adultery were linked in people's thinking. Adultery indicated female sexual misconduct or the extraconjugal relations of a man with a married woman. A man was only guilty of adultery because he violated another man's property rights through intercourse with the first man's wife. In this scenario adultery is an offense against a man's rights over his wife. Because women were either married, and required to be utterly faithful to their husband, or a virgin and required to be faithful to their father, offenses against them were not punishable. Offenses against the rights of husbands were punished, but offences against the rights of woman were not. The Bill of Divorce gave the woman the permission to remarry. This is the social and legal context in which the question of divorce is proposed in the Gospel.

In this patriarchal society marriages were arranged by the men who owned the woman or girl. They agreed a contract and an exchange of payments. A woman was not her own possession. The remnant of this thinking is evident in the wedding entrance procession of the bride where the woman is brought in on the arm of the man who owns her (her father) and she is given to the next man who will own her, her husband.

To have entered into this debate would have dragged Jesus down into the mire of legal nonsense and social constructs he had come to challenge and to free people from, therefore his answer is important. In this context Jesus' teaching on divorce, and by implication on marriage, is radical and different to the status quo.

The Answer:

"From the beginning God created them male and female...and a man shall be joined to his wife...and the two become one flesh". The basis of human life and the marriage relationship is utter equality with each other, because God has created this. This is why in the Church's Rite of Marriage the couple arrive at the church door together, where they are greeted by the priest who leads them to the altar, where they, as equals to each other, before God and the community, in their own freedom of decision-making, give themselves to each other in an inclusive life-long relationship. Sometimes, however, people arrive at the altar with less freedom, inequality and less insight into marriage than what they need for the life of the marriage.

Therefore, when Jesus is speaking *against* divorce he is also speaking *for* a woman's right to be treated with equality. A wife is in union with her husband and not his chattel! In this, as in other places, such as the declaration of the Resurrection, the equal or even primordial place, and voice, of women is an essential, radical element of early Christianity. Jesus' teaching challenges us to

understand the fundamental equality of the sexes. Consequently, it is no longer possible to say that only the unfaithful woman can be guilty of adultery against her husband. Now, the husband too, when he dismisses his wife, sins against her.

This is a radical response and it appears to leave no room for marriage failure. Consequently it is important to consider how the teaching in Mark's Gospel is modified by both Paul and Matthew in their exception clauses. So what are we to make of this teaching in Mark's Gospel? It is hard to know exactly how Jesus intended us to understand his words: is it a divine law, an ideal to strive for, a challenge to be faced, an extreme example or a radical call to some, in the way that the call to being a eunuch for the kingdom is for others?

It is clear that the early Church had problems with this teaching. This is evidenced in the exception clauses of Paul and Matthew. The actualisation of Jesus' "one flesh/no divorce" teaching is not easy to deal with, even today. However, it is consistent with Jesus' radical teachings "leave the dead to bury the dead"; "once the hand is put to the plough...those who turn away are not worthy of the kingdom", etc. In this radical call to discipleship there is a consistent message concerning the nature of the Kingdom of God. The call to discipleship is a call to be respond personally to the in-breaking of the Kingdom of God.

Today's world:

Divorce is a reality that impacts on the lives of real people and within families. It is not a judgement on the moral goodness or badness of a person or a couple. Within the Christian Churches there is wide variance in the approach to marriage and divorce. Where the Roman Catholics do not admit of divorce and a second marriage the Orthodox and the Anglicans do. The Orthodox position is simply: the Church marries the couple therefore the Church can dispense them from the sacrament. The Roman Catholic position is more complex because marriage is still viewed essentially from a juridical perspective not a liturgical one. In Roman Catholic theology the couple have the theological/ministerial capacity to marry each other with the Church looking on. But when it comes to divorce the couple do not have the equal theological/ministerial capacity to dispense each other from their shared sacrament, because the sacramental bond can only be dispensed by the Church through the legal process of annulment – all rather complicated and confusing.

Perhaps we have treated the radical nature of marriage too lightly and celebrated it too freely? Perhaps the radical nature of marriage is seen at the end and not at the beginning of a marriage? Perhaps this is why it took until the 1170 for marriage to be declared a sacrament, because sacramental marriage might be the product of a relationship that has stood the test of time, rather than one that starts out that way? Does divorce prove the nature of marriage, or is it the marriage that defines the nature of divorce? I don't know the answer to that, but those who live the vocation of marriage do (but I'd love to receive your insights!).

Divorce and remarriage remain a complex pastoral issue and an issue for Church unity. Recognition of the complexities of the New Testament evidence shouldn't stop us from acknowledging the value of Jesus' teaching; that those who marry are equal to each other in their union, and because they are created in the image of God they become "one flesh". Where equality, freedom and an acceptance of God's creation exist marriage is possible, where these are lacking marriage is probably not possible.

Jesus' teaching must be placed in the context of his proclamation of the Kingdom of God and the call to each of us, in the context of our own lives, to radical discipleship. For some the radical call is to a marriage of utter and profound unity, for others the call to the desert, for some the call to teaching, others the call to prophecy, others the call to ministry, most the call to parenting.

Jesus' vision of the restored kingdom and a restored creation in which the unity and mutuality of marriage mirror God's original plan is to be balanced by his radical call to each of us to a discipleship that accepts the radical demands of God. Consequently, the Church and our Parish must welcome those who seek God whatever their marital status or type and ensure that our pastoral care and pastoral welcome is in accord with John 4:7-42 and 7:53- 8:11. We are not a perfect society as some would want us to be, closed to all but the most virtuous. We are a community of sinners making our way forward on the journey of faith. None can judge the other; no one can know another person's marriage.

All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in Christ.

Fr Joe