Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Psalm 95

1 Corinthians 7:32-35

Mark 1:21-18

“Brothers and Sister: I should like you to be free of anxieties” (1 Cor. 7:32)

The second reading says it is better to be unmarried rather than to be married. Let me tell you that it isn’t the case. I can tell you from experience that I have anxieties galore. You have one furnace to worry about. I have five. You have one roof to worry about. I had ninety-two thousand square feet of roof plus to worry about. And so it goes.

My take on the second reading is putting things into balance. People, unmarried or married, have to have God in their lives. More than that, they have to have religion in their lives because God created a community of believers and these believers had to have a structure and a mission in life. If you are married, you possibly have a family. In this day and age, this day and age pumps up the responsibilities of family-making to such a degree that the anxiety of making a family, crowds out the community of the church. In the eyes of God this becomes an imbalance. In this day and age, this day and age makes you choose – be a family or go to church. We know that going to church is a foundation for our lives. That’s why we are here. It is our belief that there can be a balance in going to church and being married and raising a family.

A church cannot be a church without families and families cannot be God-fearing families without going to church. Church has to be family orientated and families have to have skin in the game of being church-goers.

Our parish is trying to involve families to their liking. Our Faith Formation Program is family orientated. The Blue Team of Faith Formation Families have tried to stimulate families in this day and age to make a greater effort in feeling they are wanted here at BMT. We invite them to have a family skate today at our village rink from 2-4 on Sunday. We invite them to have a ‘Souper Bowl’ Sunday by bringing in cans of soup for our Stanley Zynda Food Pantry by “betting” on the Super Bowl. These are small but important steps to allow our families to feel part of their greater BMT church family.

What is keeping families away from going to church? Let’s look at our Gospel. It’s all about demons. Are demons effecting our families to keep them away from the Catholic Church? Sabine Schratz, O.P. says, “Biblical passages referring to demons fill the modern reader with unease. Demons, however, were common belief in the times of Jesus. They helped explain the cause of evils befalling people. Without proper scientific knowledge, how else could certain illnesses, for example, have been understood? Etymology can help us here. The Greek word *daimon* derives from the Indo-European root *da* meaning ‘to divide’. Demons are divisive forces. They separate us from one another and make us ‘curve in upon ourselves’, to borrow a phrase from Augustine and Luther. ‘Demon’ can harm individuals, groups or whole societies. When Jesus announces the end of their reign and proclaims the Kingdom of God what other could this mean than restoring right relationships between us in every way and on every level.”[[1]](#endnote-1)

1. Scripture in Church, Vol. 48, No. 189, Dominican Publications, 2018, Dublin Ireland, p. 31

   So are our families infested with demons that cause illness? Are our families turned in on themselves that separate themselves from one another internally and separate themselves from the greater community externally? Smart phones, travel teams, veganism, Yoga, fast food? All these examples are good in themselves but have the potential of becoming divisive forces separating us from one another and making us curve in upon ourselves. They can potentially separate ourselves and our families from the Church.

   In the extreme, as is very common today, individuals go their own way without regard to Church community. Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, Whatsapp, Yoga, Eastern philosophies are no longer tools to bring us together in the Church but become churches in themselves. They are the new teaching with authority not Jesus with the authority to exorcise the demons that divide us.

   Who is the new Moses? Mark Zuckerberg? (Who is even now questioning what he has done to the world.)

   We need to exorcise demons in our midst with the authority of Jesus. No need to get rid of all these apps that surround us. Liberate them so that they can enhance the community of believers. Don’t let them make us ill and leave us in cocoons that separate us.

   “If today you hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” (Psalm 95)

   Don’t let the smart phones try to outsmart us. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)