



Bringing Home the Word

Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time | June 10, 2018

Our House United

By Mary Katharine Deeley

I used to dream about the kind of house I would live in when I grew up. I wanted gracious rooms, a large kitchen, a family room and—for reasons beyond understanding—I wanted a stream running through the house with a waterfall somewhere in it. The house I actually live in was more than a hundred years old when we bought it. It needed a boiler, a roof, and a new bathroom within the first year.

The rooms were small; the kitchen had no drawers. There were no closets on the first floor. But it was ours and we

raised our family in it. The smallness of the house did not seem to matter to our children’s school friends who regularly visited, knew they could call us if there was an emergency, and could count on a full bowl of fruit salad (strawberries, blueberries, kiwis, and grapes) in the refrigerator.

It would have been easy to complain about the difference between the dream and the reality. My husband and I might have argued about getting a bigger home. But we realized that “home” was not about the building. It was—and is—about the community and relationships inside.

Had the love not been there, we might have even become divided over the flaws. I like to think that our marriage and family were blessed with the grace to see what was important. I know that in a world of poverty, we were privileged. But I believe that having each other and sharing our faith was our strength and our foundation, and would have been even if we had lost everything. +

Home is about the relationships and the community inside the building.

Sunday Readings

Genesis 3:9–15

The LORD God then called to the man and asked him: Where are you?

2 Corinthians 4:13—5:1

We have a building from God, a dwelling not made with hands, eternal in heaven.

Mark 3:20–35

[Jesus said,] “Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”

A Word From Pope Francis

Allow me to call your attention to the value and beauty of marriage...The differences between man and woman are not for opposition or subordination, but for communion and generation, always in the image and likeness of God. Without mutual self-giving, neither one can understand the other in depth.

—Address to bishops in Puerto Rico, June 8, 2015



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Is there any created thing that doesn’t lead me back to God or make me believe him?
- Is there a way I hide from God in shame for my choices?



When Spouses Have Different Beliefs

By Donna Erickson Couch

After the romantic dust of my marriage settled, fundamental life questions surfaced when my closest friend died in a car accident. As I grieved, my husband, Dana, comforted me as best he could. When I talked, however, about my need for God and church (I had drifted away from Catholicism), he was silent. Eventually he told me that, while he didn't mind if I wanted religion again, he wouldn't participate.

Ten years into our marriage, I not only forged my way back to my faith alone, but embarked on a life-changing spiritual quest. Through years of confusion, I prayed and suffered in silence as I tried to reconcile my love for God *and* for my nonparticipating husband. I worried about my role in Dana's salvation and agonized over how to raise our children in the faith alone.

Years passed until I finally made peace with my anxieties. I eventually received four transformative insights:

1. After a few years married, it's common to experience a spiritual awakening.

Upon completion of confirmation class or during college, many drift away from their faith. When thoughts turn to marriage, faith is frequently downplayed. We may accept the naïve presumption that "love is all you need."

Later, perhaps after a child or two, it's common to experience a need for church again. Frequently, those who return are surprised to discover a treasury of meaning in their renewed faith. Along with the elation, however, may linger thoughts about the negative effects this may have on a marriage.

2. Authentic spirituality isn't divisive.

As my inner life grew, I felt an increasing distance between Dana and me. When I tried to describe my feelings to a friend, he quoted Jesus: "I have come to bring not peace but the sword...and one's enemies will be those of his household" (Matthew 10:34-36).

Though discouraged, with the help of prayer and a spiritual director, I found deeper meaning in this biblical passage. I learned that, even though our incompatible religious beliefs could feel insurmountable, time quells the fear. Like marriage, when we commit to God for the long haul, it's natural to sometimes experience tension.

3. The inner journey is a solitary one.


In another Scripture passage, Jesus says there is no marriage in heaven (Mark 12:25). If we look at this as a blueprint for our spiritual journey, an important insight is revealed: While there are many companions on the outer journey, no one can walk the inner path with us. While we can try to describe our personal

relationships with God, no one—even our spouse—may share those experiences completely. God calls each of us into a mystical marriage, demanding that we forsake all others.

4. All relationships mirror the divine relationship.

All relationships teach us about God. Can we observe the divine in everyone? Equipped with a bigger vision, we welcome the challenges of living with those who, without words, can teach us about the subtleties of God's presence. Meanwhile, spiritual directors and friends can help us process our complex relationship with God. Frequently, others serve this need better than those with whom we live.

If you're experiencing a spiritual awakening while married to someone on a different page, take heart. The challenge of living a God-centered life provides an opportunity to repeatedly experience what it means to fall in love—with your spouse, your faith, and the Lord. When God means something different to your spouse, it's not the end of the world but rather the beginning of a profound encounter with love's sacred mysteries. +



Lord, you reveal to us the will of God. Help me to know and live out the will of God in my life.

From Hopeful Meditations for Every Day of Easter Through Pentecost,
Rev. Warren J. Savage
and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

June 11-16, 2018

Monday, St. Barnabas:
Acts 11:21b-26; 13:1-3 / Mt 5:1-12

Tuesday, Weekday:
1 Kgs 17:7-16 / Mt 5:13-16

Wednesday, St. Anthony of Padua:
1 Kgs 18:20-39 / Mt 5:17-19

Thursday, Weekday:
1 Kgs 18:41-46 / Mt 5:20-26

Friday, Weekday:
1 Kgs 19:9a, 11-16 / Mt 5:27-32

Saturday, Weekday:
1 Kgs 19:19-21 / Mt 5:33-37