

27B SML 2018
MK 10:2-16

While there is much wisdom in the counsel of Emerson, “Hitch your wagon on a star,” and the need to wed idealism to every ordinary task, it is inevitable that enthusiasms cool. Those who made it to the North Pole say that the ecstasy at reaching it was very much dampened by the long, weary Arctic winter, during which the hidden weaknesses of men begin to appear. As the fires died down, the quarrels began.

Three laws may be given to help judge the difference between true and false enthusiasm:

First:

Decisions and resolutions taken during an enthusiastic moment mean little unless they are tested by time and by waiting. At the beginning of the public life of Our Blessed Lord, when many wished to follow Him, He refused to accept them. “He knew what was in man.”

- ✓ The request to sit at His right and at His left by James and John was not immediately granted. It was tested by the ability to bear sacrifice and to drink the cup of His Passion and His Crucifixion.

- ✓ After multiplying the bread, the multitude wanted to make Him a king. Yet, by the next day, many left Our Blessed Lord and returned to their former way of life.

Economic kingships last only while the bread is plentiful, and the circus is in town. It is always a good policy never to choose the most enthusiastic person as a leader. Wait to see how much wood they have to feed the fire.

Second:

Almost all moments of high physical stimulation are followed by a period of depression. As I said in my homily two weeks ago:

- ✓ the excesses of lust deflate and create its own emptiness.
- ✓ the buzz from drinking is followed by the hangover,
- ✓ the dream stage of opium is followed by addiction.

The body cannot sustain continued pleasure. As a child, I hated to be tickled because my older brother did not know when to stop tickling. The tickling stopped when I took a swing.

Third:

In all human love, it must be realized that every man promises a woman, and every woman promises a man, that which only God alone can ultimately give, namely, to love another person as God loves them:

- ✓ for better for worse
- ✓ for richer for poorer
- ✓ in sickness and in health
- ✓ until death do us part.

That's how God loves us, unconditionally, and that's why matrimony is a sacrament in the Church, as these vows can only be fulfilled with the help of sacramental grace.

One of the reasons why marriages are shipwrecked is because as the young couple leaves the altar (if they come to the altar at all), they fail to realize that human feelings tire and that the enthusiasm of the honeymoon is not the same as the more solid happiness of enduring human love over the years.

In the first moments of human love, one does not see the little hidden imperfections and deformities which later on appear. Sometimes it is not so much the great hurts which cause enthusiasm to cool, but rather:

- ✓ the steady diet of mediocrities,
- ✓ the repeated insincerities,
- ✓ the getting used to one another's company,
- ✓ the everyday dust of human existence.

There comes a time when the husband seems less handsome, and the wife less beautiful just because of the habit of seeing

each other. When enthusiasm cools, then one hears, “You are not the one whom I married.”

Whether in marriage or in the priesthood, life is not a snare because the bubbles cease in the champagne glass. True happiness comes to man unless he places his heart in a false infinite. One who sees that marital love or love of his priesthood is nothing but Divine love on pilgrimage, will use marriage or priesthood as a kind of Jacob’s ladder to climb back again through virtue to the Source of all Love, Who is God Himself. Such spiritual fires never cool, but grow with the coals lighted at the furnace of heaven, that touched the lips of the prophets and defined the presence of the Holy Spirit that first Pentecost.

I read a daily devotional entitled “Jesus Calling” by Sarah Young. Love it. Love it. Love it. Here’s the entry for August 27th, which speaks to mediocrities, the daily dust of human existence, in marriage or priesthood, in life in general:

Spend time with Me for the pure pleasure of being in My company. I can brighten up the dullest of gray days; I can add sparkle to the routines of daily life. You have to repeat so many tasks day after day. This can dull your thinking until your mind slips into neutral. A mind that is unfocused

is vulnerable to “the world, the flesh, and the devil,” all of which exert a downward pull on your thoughts. As your thinking processes deteriorate, you become increasingly confused and directionless. The best remedy is to refocus your mind and heart on Me, your constant Companion.

Let’s take a test. On a scale of 0 to 10, what value do you give to ordination in order for a man to live and act like a priest? Can a man studying for the priesthood confect the Eucharist, absolve sin, or anoint the sick prior to his ordination? Of course not. Everyone gives ordination the value of 10. He needs to be ordained in order to live and act in “Holy Orders” (hence the name of the sacrament) like a priest.

On a scale of 0 to 10, what value do you give to marriage in order to live and act like your married? Can a couple live and act like they are married prior to their wedding? Many couples do. Couples who live and act like they are married without being married obviously give marriage the value of 0 as their actions say loud and clear you don’t need to be married to live and act like you are married. How many marriages of those cohabitating are shipwrecked because, out of the gate, they give marriage a value of 0, since you don’t need to be married to live and act like you are married? The young couple living

together approach the altar thinking they have “lived together.” They have lived together before the enthusiasm has cooled. They will shipwreck because they do not value marriage in the first place. Marriage gets a zero.

Many of the false enthusiasms in the world today come from those who find spurious happiness in the here and now, like cohabitation: happiness in the here and now, but what about the quiet whisper of the long haul? What about the more solid happiness of enduring human love over the years?

The writer of 1Kings greased the skids:

Then the Lord said, “Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord. Behold, the Lord is about to pass by.” And a great and mighty wind tore into the mountains and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a still, small voice.

The truest enthusiasms are never loud. Our Blessed Lord’s voice was never heard shouting in the streets.

To be enthusiastic in one's vocation, whether priesthood or marriage is to live out the meaning of the word "enthusiastic," which comes from two Greek words, *en* meaning "full", and *theos*, meaning "God." To be enthusiastic means "to be filled with God."