

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Friendship and Marriage Seventh Week in Ordinary Time Friday, May 24, 2013
8:15 AM **Sir 6:5-17; Mk 10:1-12** (If you really want a good spouse, be faithful to God, be reverent to God and respectful of God, and you will draw such a person to yourself.)

In both readings we have very human concerns: **friendship and marriage. They are related but not the same thing.**

In the first reading from the Book of Sirach, the author is reflecting on what it takes to find a true friend, and part of this is, first of all, a faithfulness in God and a fear of God; that means a reverence for God. That will attract people of a like character. In this case like attracts like; **similar people attract similar people.** So you are faithful to God, and then you will find a faithful friend. But be wary. All kinds of people will want to be your friends when things are going well and not be around when you really need them. Why? **Human beings are not trustworthy, by and large. Their primary concern is themselves, so be wary.**

Now transfer this into the idea of marriage. Marriage is really not first and foremost friendship. **Marriage** is a different kind of relationship. It's **rooted in the difference between male and female.** That's what he says, "God made them male and female." This is the foundation of marriage; it is not a friendship. It is not primarily companionship. It's something else. **It's a union brought about by God so that a man and a woman can become one flesh.** The purpose of this oneness is of course to bring about new flesh, primarily. It has other meanings and purposes as well.

Again, people often choose their spouses for poor reasons. I think we can borrow from Sirach and say **if you really want a good spouse, be faithful to God, be reverent to God and respectful of God, and you will draw such a person to yourself.** And if for some reason you choose a spouse for some other reason, or reasons, you may be doing yourself a

certain amount of damage. You may be creating a frustrating situation in your life that you have to get out of later.

And the Church acknowledges this. That's why **the Church has annulments, to pronounce publically that this never was right in the first place.** It was on the wrong basis. An annulment does not necessarily imply fault, but **it does imply a certain incompatibility on a spiritual level. Spiritual could be partly psychological, partly physical, but it's more than both. It includes all of who we are.**

But if we make a right choice and we choose someone that God really has destined for us, then that becomes a unity that no force can separate, and no force ever will.