

## Homily for the 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

Several years ago I went walking through an old cemetery. It had not been used for many years. The tombstones reflected the customs of a bygone era. They all had little messages inscribed on them. As I journeyed through this resting place that seemed so long forgotten, I started reading those inscriptions. I was especially intrigued by the ones that dealt with married life.

One made reference to his wife as “my virtuous companion.” I felt a great loss as I read the following words: “husband and children are left but the house is lonely now.” But the one that seemed to summarize it the best were four simple words engraved underneath the names of a married couple. It simply read: “They loved each other.”

These four words very beautifully summarized not only the mystery and fragility of marriage which is central to today’s readings but also the power of that love to extend beyond itself and touch others. In a very real sense it demonstrated how the love of two people can become the model for what should be able to be said of all of us – that we loved each other.

We live in a fragile world. It is filled with violence and hatred, with arguments and discord. But all these difficult and painful events and arguments should never distract us from the one task that is more central to our lives than anything else. We, like all married couples, are called to love each other not for what we can do or for what we have but simply because we are who we are – a creation of God fashioned in beauty and in love and redeemed by Jesus Christ.

God loves all of us. Sometimes that divine love can be very tangible as we watch a child being baptized or a sick person being anointed. God's presence is easy to grasp. But most of the time God depends on us to make divine love real. God depends on the care and concern we give each other. For without these any talk of God loving us is as hallow as the bells that call us to worship.

May it be said of us as it was of that married couple: "They loved each other."