



## **Homiletic Guide - What Does Love Cost?**

November 10, 2024 - Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

**First Reading:** 1 Kings 17:10-16 - He saw a widow gathering sticks and called to her: Fear not.

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalms 146:7,8-9,9-10 - Praise the Lord, my soul!

**Second Reading:** Hebrews 9:24-28 - Christ was offered once to exhaust the sins of many.

**Gospel:** Mark 12:38-44 or Mark 12:41-44 - The widow's mite.

The following notes are provided as a leadoff for your reflection—it is not necessary to address every bullet point in your homily. With that in mind, here are some thoughts to ponder:

- **Marriage and having children have come to be seen as capstone achievements, instead of the cornerstone of the couple's future life together.**
  - Some people believe that low-income couples should not become parents because they cannot provide proper support for their children.
  - Others delay their wedding because they can't afford the major expense they believe it requires, or they opt for a "cheaper" civil ceremony.
  - Those who put off marriage and having children for purely financial reasons are like the widow in the first reading. They fail to see the rich blessings that God can provide even in the midst of scarce resources, and they are missing the point that love and joy bring a form of prosperity that goes beyond just wealth.
  - The family finds true happiness, not in an abundance of worldly belongings, but in the abundance of love that flows from the Sacred Heart of Jesus.



- **Hope and redemption** for the widowed, the divorced, single parents, and those struggling with infertility.
  - Psalm 146 reminds us that the Lord secures justice for the oppressed, gives bread to the hungry, sets prisoners free, raises up those who are bowed down, loves the righteous, and comes to the aid of the orphan and the widow.
  - For those who have experienced loss, abandonment, abuse, or their own woundedness that has harmed those around them, these are words of encouragement that in Christ, redemption and healing can be found.
  - Out of profound respect for the teaching of Christ, the Church maintains a presumption that the wedding vows are a permanent expression of love.
  - Christians have always held marriage in higher regard than the culture around them (see 1 Cor 7:10-11), so for us a simple legal divorce does not break the marriage bond.
  - A declaration of nullity ascertains that the conditions for a valid marriage were not met in the original wedding. While difficult, the annulment process can bring healing and growth that allow sacramental marriage vows to be celebrated anew.
  - For those struggling to deal with their own past, this is an invitation to put their trust in the Lord and allow the Church to walk with them in steadfast hope for a brighter future, embraced by the love of Christ.
  
- **Love in the manner of Jesus is the ultimate expression of human freedom**, and his love is the model for a married love that is freely given, holds nothing back, is faithful, lasts a lifetime, and is open to the generation of new life in love.
  - The greatest demonstration of Jesus' perfect innocence—his freedom from all sin—came in his perfect self-offering, “once for all” (Heb 9:26).
  - His offering now stands as the measure of human love. Love is only love when it is given freely, without expectation of anything in return.
  - True love is made perfect when what is given is the totality of oneself, received as a gift from God and given without condition or reservation for others.



- “Human life acquires fullness when it becomes a *self-gift*: a gift which can express itself in *matrimony*, in *consecrated virginity*, in *self-dedication* to one's neighbor towards an ideal, or in the *choice of priestly ministry*. Parents will truly serve the life of their children if they help them *make their own lives a gift*, respecting their mature choices and fostering joyfully each vocation, including the religious and priestly one.” (The Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, 34)
- **Work and pray:** The example of the widow’s mite is not an encouragement to be reckless in our spending for others, but to give generously and responsibly in a spirit of gratitude because all we have comes from God. This is stewardship.
  - This is not about the so-called “prosperity gospel,” in which our generosity becomes a sort of contract with the expectation that God will reciprocate in-kind by granting us an abundance of wealth and material things in this life.
  - Nor should we recklessly give for the benefit of the Church or others in need, at the risk of our own well-being and that of our families.
  - Saint Ignatius of Loyola is sometimes credited with saying "Pray as if everything depended on God and work as if everything depended on you." (CCC, 2834)
  - Marriage and parenthood have a way of refashioning us into our best selves. In today’s world, we have to invest in ourselves and become diligent workers, exercising our God-given creativity and determination to make ends meet, while avoiding the extreme of overwork that leaves no time for rest and family life.
  - This parable is an invitation to love generously and courageously, in imitation of Christ. He is the one who shows us by example how to love one another, and he sends the Holy Spirit to guide and strengthen us. See this month’s bulletin insert.
- The ***Radiate Love Marriage Initiative***
  - The Catholic Church throughout California is progressing along the year-long *Radiate Love* initiative to deepen our appreciation for the gift of Marriage.



- Highlight any activities that the parish will be sponsoring in the coming months. **Emphasize that all are invited to explore the monthly resources on the website**, especially those for marriage enrichment or designed for faith sharing at home.

**Note for homilists:** This Homiletic Guide is intended to help you encourage your people to invest in their marital relationship, share the faith with their children, and open their hearts to recognize the ways the Lord is leading them to radiate love out to the world, especially through the witness of a lifelong commitment to one another. The Marriage Fact Sheet 2024 offers some important background information for your review, but not necessarily to include in your homily. The social trends regarding marriage in California are not great right now, but it is important to be positive, practical, and personal.

This Homiletic Guide is one resource among many others designed for your parish ministries or your parishioners' home use. You may want to take some time to familiarize yourself with the resources for November (bulletin insert or announcement, prayer card, blessing, intercessions, videos, etc.) on the *Radiate Love* website: [www.radiatelove.info](http://www.radiatelove.info). In particular, be sure to make use of the Intercessory Prayers and the Blessing for Families after Communion at all weekend Masses.

