

The Wedding of Kevin James Wiedelman and Shannon Maureen Joseph  
The Twenty Second Day of July, 2017 A. ✕ D.

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✕ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

In His mercy, in His great love for all men, the God who created man said “It is not good for man to be alone.” Marriage was instituted by God before there was sin. In that respect it is a holy estate, for it was put in place by a Holy God. But marriages now are different than that first, sinless union. Man sinned. Woman sinned. Their relationship with God was forever changed. And their relationship one to another was forever changed.

But after the fall into sin, when what was very good had been ruined, God reiterated that He made them male and female. And He declared “for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” Marriage wasn’t abolished in the fall. Marriage, true marriage, it is still pleasing to God.

And since that time marriage, true marriage, marriage between one chaste man and one chaste woman, has been blessed by God. That is why Kevin and Shannon are here today – to have their marriage blessed by God, and witnessed by this congregation.

St. Paul the Apostle writes of marriage. He writes that you understand the mystery of earthly marriage, for true marriage has a heavenly parallel. Earthly marriage, the marriage of Kevin and Shannon that we witness this day, is a model of a truly holy relationship. The inspired Word of God teaches that Husbands are the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the Church.

The Church is His Body, of which He is Savior. So as the Church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands. But the Apostle doesn’t stop there. “Wives”, he writes, “should submit to their husbands in everything.”

That’s not a popular notion today, as we live in a world that has spiraled downward into an exercise in inflating self-esteem and regularized perversion and debauchery. The truth of God’s creation of man, and His making of them male and female, has been rejected by our society. In place of the truth, God’s Truth, sinful men teach gender fluidity and non-binary orientations.

Marriage as an institution in our society is in shambles, as are decency, honesty, truth and civility. Men do as they please, or as their sinful desires impel them, believing there is no consequence, no judgment.

Fallen men have bought what that slithering, sleazy salesman of Eden was peddling. Fallen men stress independence, freedom of will, and gender interchangeability. That is one of the great lies of our day – that men and women are interchangeable. Both male and female were created in the image of God, so in that sense there is equality – both are equally fallen. But male and female are not interchangeable, nor will they ever be.

For based on the heavenly truth modeled in earthly marriage, such teaching is an assault on God. It is to reject the Word of God, and to say with that hissing first idolater hawking deadly fruit “Did God really say?” But that is what all sin is. All sin has its source in that first rejection of what God clearly said. Every sin you have committed is a sin against God, a rejection of His Word, a desire to remake yourself and the world in your image.

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But God expects, indeed God commands, that men obey His Word. And like it or not, all men will be judged not by what men think is right, not by what men find expedient or trendy or reasonable according to their fallen reason, but God will judge all men by His clear Word. How far we have departed from God's command through the Apostle "each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband."

And this God commands not to place anyone into servitude, not to puff anyone up with pride, or feed the power-hungry, or the satisfy the sinful desire to "lord it over" someone else, or indulge a victim mentality, but rather, the apostle writes, that husband and wife submit to one another in the fear of God.

That is the fruit of faith, saving faith. That is pleasing and good in God's sight. For that relationship, that blessed marriage, is a type, a shadow, a model, of the great love of God in Christ Jesus for His Holy Church, the chaste and pure Bride, and her love for Him.

Holy, chaste, pure. They are not attributes of fallen, sinful men. So the God who made them male and female said "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." But I am talking about Christ and the Church.

For on the cross, God the Son, the true Groom, was forsaken of His Father. And there, on the cross, He left His mother as He declared her to be mother of St. John, and John her new son. It was in her womb that He took on your flesh, the flesh of men. So leaving His Father and His Mother, He was joined to His Bride, the Holy Church, with whom God became One Flesh.

He is the source of all holiness, all chastity, and all purity. He is the source of all forgiveness. It is He who freely gave His life, though sinless, bearing the sins of the world. And dying for those sins, and rising to new life on the third day, He imputes His righteousness, His holiness, His chastity, His purity, to all who believe in Him. That is what the True Bridegroom does for His Bride. That is the model He provides upon which marriage is based, the model He provides to Kevin as husband, and to Shannon as his wife this day.

Kevin and Shannon, it pleases God that you seek His blessing on your marriage this day. And He is pleased to give it. For your faith, the faith He has given you, has led you to do what is right in His eyes. That is what faith does. Faith knows that God's Way is the best Way, the only Way that leads to true happiness, the only Way that leads to everlasting life. That is not to say that your marriage will be easy. The vows you will take this day remind you that there well may be days that are worse, days in which you are poorer, days that see sickness and tribulation.

Which is to say that you will live out your married lives in a fallen world. You will live your lives as sinners declared to be saints. That it is to say that you understand, you believe, you trust, that in Christ, who is the center of your marriage, there will be better days, the best days, days of heavenly riches, days of true health, which is health of soul.

And while you vow this day to love and cherish each other until death parts you, that love finds its source in the God who is Love, the God who truly cherishes you, the God whose love overcomes sin and death, the God who is faithful to His promises.

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Kevin and Shannon, let Christ be the center of your marriage. Find forgiveness, comfort, consolation and joy in Him. You are baptized, forgiven all your sins in the Blood of Christ. You are washed in the washing by which Christ prepares for Himself His Bride, radiant, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, holy and blameless. And that is how you are joined together this day, husband and wife made one flesh.

Here at this altar you partake together of Christ's Heavenly Mysteries, and as you kneel together to receive Christ's Body and Blood, you commune with God and with one another. In that Communion, the One Holy Communion, you are joined to the God of Love and so joined to His Holy Church, His perfect Bride, bought by the selfless atoning sacrifice of the Bridegroom. In Him you are one. And that love, that blessed union, neither man nor death can put asunder.

Kevin and Shannon, may the God of love, the Triune God, the only True God, bless your marriage.

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