

Second Hand Preacher

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

February 1, 2015

1 Corinthians 7:32-35

Many things in life are a question of timing. In comedy, for instance, if you put the punch-line at the beginning of the joke, it might not be as funny. On first look, it may seem that St. Paul doesn't like marriage but really, it is about timing. He believes that Jesus is coming again so soon that getting married doesn't make sense. Time, he believes, is so short that soon all Christians will be in Heaven and there will be no need to be married. So in the short time that is left on earth, everyone should be concentrated on getting to know the Lord. They should be living lives of prayer and service so they can have Heaven here on earth. The care of the greater Christian community would be more important than the individual family.

It wasn't until later that the beautiful theology of marriage was developed. The community realized that it didn't know when the time of the Lord would come and they might not be going back to the Lord as soon as they thought they might be. Since Paul wasn't sure about how soon the Lord would return, is there any need for such single-mindedness?

This is why some people live the vocation of a single life. For many people, this life is temporary before they find someone to marry. For some, they feel they have a real calling to be single. I have a friend named Mike who considered priesthood but didn't feel called to that life. He remained single to live life to its fullest being able to travel and serve in such a way that would not have been possible for a priest or a married man. He can be valuable to both Church and community serving the Lord freely. The Lord can be served in many ways. Our society often overlooks the very valid way the unmarried can serve God and God's Church. God uses all of us in His timing.