

HOMILY 27TH SUN OT YRB 2018

I was reading a study from Harvard School of Public Health. They found that people who have a lot of friends are more likely to recover from heart attacks than those with few or no friends. They also found that people with no friends are three times more likely to die than people with at least one friend.

This confirms what God said in the Book of Genesis that we heard in the first reading. “It is not good for man to be alone.” We need to have relationships with other human beings. We have unique human dignity because we are made in the image and likeness of God. We are relational by our very nature and our life depends upon these relationships. The first reading and the Gospel make reference to marriage. Marriage is a unique relationship among the many relationships that we may have and it is not based upon romance or emotion. It is based upon a powerful vow. Relationships are hard and marriage is not easy. It is a marvelous thing when you have a good marriage, but both partners need to be working on their relationships in a marriage to have a good marriage. As soon as one or both partners stop working on the marriage, the marriage is going to be in trouble. And marriage is a vocation that must be discerned. In our culture we kind of assume that all of us will someday be married and have children, and there is a lot of pressure in our culture to marry; however I think some people are called to the single life. For example, I am called to the single life. Being single allows me to take all of that energy I would put into being a good husband and father into my ministry. And even if you have a vocation to the married life, most of us spent our first 25-30 years single. And if you are married, since most spouses do not die at the same time you have a 50/50 chance of being single again. Even if you are married, your spouse cannot be everything for you. You still

need to have friendships. It is not good for us to be alone, and research shows that our lives depend upon friendships.

All of our relationships are a gift from God. We need to cherish each one of our friendships. Sometimes we undervalue our friendships. Sometimes it seem like it is easier to just make new friends than to repair a broken friendship. Actually, our friendships become better and stronger is we make it through the difficult time. Sometimes we have to adjust our expectations of friendships. We cannot expect people to be something that they are not. Again, any one friend cannot meet all of our needs and we cannot meet all the needs of another person. That is why we need more than just one friend. I have always lived in the Detroit area and many of my friends do as well. I still have friends from grade school and high school. These friendships are priceless to me. If you have moved around a lot you probably have to work at it harder, but you still need these friendships.

Pope Francis has given us three words to be used as a starting point for strengthening relationships with one another and with God, please, thanks and sorry. Please, we need to make our needs known to others. We cannot expect people to meet needs that they do not know about. We need to practice vulnerability and interdependence. Thanks, we need to practice giving thanks. We need to be verbose in words of gratitude and we need to be very generous with appreciation. Sorry, we need to work toward reconciliation with God and with one another. To have reconciliation, first, both parties must forgive. Without forgiveness, reconciliation is not possible. We also have to acknowledge our own brokenness and trust that God will help us heal our broken relationships. Please, thanks and sorry. That is a good start. We need our relationships with God and with one another to live and do well.