

Homily by Deacon Jim Olshefski Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time October 3, 2021

Steve Jobs, business magnet and co-founder of Apple, led, by worldly standards, a very successful life. Unfortunately, he contracted pancreatic cancer and died at a very young age of 56. If you search the internet for "Steve Jobs last words," you'll find a soliloquy that expresses regret that his accumulation of fame and fortune was the main driver in his life until he learned of his life-threatening disease; he, then, voiced this reflection from which I extracted the following snippets:

- I [now] realize that all the recognition and wealth that I took so much pride in, have paled and become meaningless in the face of [my] impending death.
- Material things lost can be found. But there is one thing that can never be found when it is lost—"life."
- Whichever stage in life [you] are at right now, with time, [you] will face the day when the curtain comes down. [Therefore,] treasure love for your family, love for your spouse, love for your friends.
- As we grow older, and hence wiser, we slowly realize that
 - Wearing a \$300 watch or a \$30 watch—They both tell the same time.
 - Whether we drive a \$150,000 car or a \$20,000 car, the road and distance travelled are the same, and we get to the same destination.
 - Whether the house we live in is 3,000 or 300 square feet—loneliness is the same.
- You will realize: Your true inner happiness does not come from the material things of this world.
- Therefore, when you have [family and friends]—That is true happiness.

...

These "final words of Steve Jobs" are quite stirring; however, as with many things on the internet, they are not true. He never publicly uttered these words, based upon all available fact-checking sites. Yet, these words, by whomever authored them, still ring true and relevant in our day and age. The essence of these words highlight the importance of love, family and friendships over the material things of this world.

In today's first reading, we heard an excerpt from the second creation story in Genesis when God said: "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him." So, God created woman, who man recognized was "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh."

In the Gospel, Jesus responds to the trap laid by the Pharisees with a quote from this passage:
But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female.

For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate."

And that has been the teaching of the Church ever since. The sacrament of matrimony between one man and one woman continues to be foundational to our faith. As St. Pope John Paul II said:

*Marriage is an act of will that signifies and involves a mutual **gift**, which unites the spouses and binds them to their eventual souls, with whom they make up a sole family - a domestic church.*

However, in society today, the gift of marriage and family are at risk. Married couples and their families must work hard to enable the family, the domestic church, to flourish.

That gift of matrimony, and family, was celebrated in this very Cathedral last week when Bishop Johnston honored 90 golden jubilarians, couples married for 50 years. In his homily to the jubilarians and their families, Bishop Johnston said these words, which I use with his permission:

"Marriage, and life as a disciple of Christ, even if you aren't married, is not so much about deciding what to acquire, but what to surrender. Not so much about accumulating but choosing what to let go of. Not just things, but ego, pride, selfishness, anger. The things that keep us from love., "

Bishop Johnston continued, "It seems like a paradox. Losing to gain. But, in essence, that is what love is. It is surrendering—surrendering yourself for someone else without strings attached. Jesus models this—God surrendering himself as a gift for us and to us, with no strings attached. Spouses do that in marriage, and then they do it again for their children."

I will end with four bits of advice from the NOT Steve Jobs' last words regarding love and family:

- Don't educate your children to be rich. Educate them to be happy, so when they grow up they will know the value of things and not the price.
- The one who [truly] loves you will never leave you for another because even if there are 100 reasons to give up, he or she will find one reason to hold on.
- There is a big difference between a human being and being human.
- If you just want to walk fast, walk alone! But if you want to walk far, walk together!