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**31st Sunday in Ordinary
Time
November 4-5, 2017**

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Questions, Comments Suggestions?
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Living Catholic in the 808: Getting Married on a Black Sand Beach

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One of my parish colleagues shared how her brother recently got married down at Punalu'u Beach. She was elated because they had been dating for over fifteen years, living together most of that time. The man wouldn't propose earlier because of complications with her ex-husband and four children. But now, fifteen years later, they were finally wed.

My coworker, a Cradle Catholic, talked story with me because she was shocked at how some people reacted to her news. When talking with other active Catholics here and there in the months leading up to the wedding, they would share in her excitement.....but only until they heard it was taking place at a beach. At that point, many good, faithful Catholics lost their smile and offered their condolences. (A beach wedding means another non-sacramental marriage, another non-Catholic priest presided wedding.)

My colleague was broken-hearted, not by the wedding, but by the reaction of these well-meaning, loving Catholic Christians. Seeing the ring on her brother's finger was one answer to a decade of prayers. It was cause for celebration, not mourning.

Sure, she now prays they will one day pursue marriage convalidation. In the meantime, can our goal of strengthening marriage and family translate into happiness about a wedding, even if it takes place on a beach?