

**Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time 2024 Mark 10.2-16**

**Genesis 2.18-24, Hebrews 2.9-11**

In today's Gospel reading, two Sacraments are alluded to. First, the Sacrament of Marriage. The Pharisees ask Jesus, "Is it lawful for a husband to divorce his wife?" The Pharisees came to catch Christ in a trap. If Jesus says that it is okay for divorce, then Jesus would be contradicting Himself. As St. Thomas Aquinas states, "He Himself was a preacher of Chastity," if Jesus says that divorce was not allowed, Jesus would be speaking against Mosaic law." St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that what the Pharisees were seeking is to have the power to divorce for any reason.

Jesus takes the time to explain some significant elements of Marriage beginning with the creation of man and woman. Jesus takes us back to the creation story, our first reading from Genesis. We read in the creation story that "it is not good for man to be alone" (**Gn. 2.18**). God created woman from the rib of Adam. God could have made woman from the foot or from the head. God instead made woman from the direct center of man. Woman is not below nor above man. Neither man nor woman are nobler than the other – neither is more superior, neither is more significant. Rather, man and woman were created as complementary partners, being equal in dignity.

Jesus quotes **Genesis 2.24** when he says, "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." (**Gen. 2.24 and Mark 10.6-8**). God's original plan for Marriage involved one man and one woman to be united in an exclusive and indissoluble bond. Marriage involves a mutual act of total self-giving between a man and a woman. They become one flesh.

The mission for Marriage, given to us by God, is found in Genesis 1.28; "God blessed them and said be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

The Sacrament of Marriage involves a baptized male and female who jointly make a covenant (a solemn promise) with God. Marriage is the only sacrament in which the priest does NOT act "In Persona Christie" (in the person of Jesus Christ). The **CCC 1630** states that "the priest (or deacon) who assists at the celebration of a marriage receives the consent of the spouses in the name of the Church and gives

the blessing of the Church. The presence of the Church's minister (and also the witnesses) visibly expresses the fact that Marriage is an ecclesial (meaning of the Church) reality." Jesus concludes His answer with, "what God has joined together, no human being must separate."

The second Sacrament revealed is Baptism. The phrase "let the children come to me has a twofold purpose. First, it alludes to infant Baptism. It should be noted that in the time of Jesus it was customary that children were brought to the elderly, and the elderly blessed them, and as St. Thomas Aquinas writes, "and prayed, as a sign that blessing is from God. Also, they knew from experience that His touch carried salvation because He had cured the leper and many others. They also {brought} the little children because they believed the one who was touched by Him would not be disturbed by demons in the future. Hence the Church received it as a custom that the sacraments of the Church are presented to little children, that they might be more strengthened."

Entrance into the Kingdom of God consists in an intimate immersion into the life of Christ. Entrance into the Kingdom of God also requires a childlike trust and acceptance of everything Christ taught. Jesus had a special affection for children and often used their innocence and trust as an example for his disciples (and us).

My friends, today we have heard that Jesus elevated Marriage to a sacrament. Marriage is a total self-giving to one another. The covenant that a man and woman make in the Church with God is so special that it is the first blessing in the Bible which occurs in Genesis 1.28 "God blessed them," and then the mission of Marriage, "and God said to them 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'" As a married couple, one of your obligations is to see that your spouse gets to heaven. Today we also heard Jesus call the children. We too are called. We are called through our Baptism to have a relationship with God, a relationship in which we have a childlike trust and innocence.

My friends, through all our Sacraments, let us grow in faith, hope, and love. Let our relationship with God be childlike, that is trusting in Him with the simplicity and innocence of a child.