



Gospel Mk 10:2-16
or (shorter form Mk 10:2-12)

What God has joined together, no one must divide.

Some Pharisees approached Jesus and asked, 'Is it against the law for a man to divorce his wife?' They were testing him. He answered them, 'What did Moses command you?' 'Moses allowed us' they said 'to draw up a writ of dismissal and so to divorce.' Then Jesus said to them, 'It was because you were so unteachable that he wrote this commandment for you. But from the beginning of creation God made them male and female. This is why a man must leave father and mother, and the two become one body. They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide.' Back in the house the disciples questioned him again about this, and he said to them, 'The man who divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another she is guilty of adultery too.'

People were bringing little children to him, for him to touch them. The disciples turned them away, but when Jesus saw this he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' Then he put his arms round them, laid his hands on them and gave them his blessing.

Reflection by Greg Sunter

In the Western world today, somewhere between one-third and one-half of marriages end in divorce. It's a statistic that we hear wheeled out as a sign of the collapse of family values in our society. However, the reverse statistic is also true: somewhere between one-half and two-thirds of marriages are lasting ones. In the last 30-40 years, divorce has transformed from being a shameful scandal to an accepted, even commonplace, fact of life. It would be uncommon not to know someone affected by divorce. Despite those who argue that divorce is too 'easy', it is an emotional and difficult decision for couples to reach and has rippling impacts on children, extended families and friends.

When the Pharisees in the gospel asked Jesus about the law regarding divorce, they really weren't interested in divorce; they wanted to check Jesus' orthodoxy – how he stood in relation to traditional teaching. Rather than respond to them directly, Jesus asks them first of all to name the teaching to which they refer. He then explains that Moses only ever wrote the instruction because the people were so unwilling to listen to God's way.

For the second time in the last few weeks, the gospel shows Jesus welcoming children and praising their attitude as the way to the kingdom of God. Children of the time had no status and were regarded as literally the property of their father. When Jesus laid his hands on the children and gave them his blessing, this was the action of a father 'claiming' the child as their own. To welcome the kingdom like a little child is to enter into living the kingdom of God without any claim to position or status; to recognise our complete dependence on others; to let go of our ideas of who is important and who is not; to allow ourselves to be 'claimed' by Jesus.

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The Living Word

Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B

3 October 2021

First Reading Gen 2:18-24

They were two in one flesh.

The Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helpmate.' So from the soil the Lord God fashioned all the wild beasts and all the birds of heaven. These he brought to the man to see what he would call them, each one was to bear the name the man would give it. The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of heaven and all the wild beasts. But no helpmate suitable for man was found for him. So the Lord God made the man fall into a deep sleep. And while he slept, he took one of his ribs and enclosed it in flesh. The Lord God built the rib he had taken from the man into a woman, and brought her to the man. The man exclaimed:

'This at last is bone from my bones,
and flesh from my flesh!
This is to be called woman,
for this was taken from man.'

This is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife, and they become one body.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 127. R. v.5

*(R.) May the Lord bless us
all the days of our lives.*

1. O blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways!
By the labour of your hands you shall eat.
You will be happy and prosper. (R.)
2. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine
in the heart of your house;
your children like shoots of the olive,
around your table. (R.)

3. Indeed thus shall be blessed
he man who fears the Lord.
May the Lord bless you from Zion
in a happy Jerusalem
all the days of your life!
May you see your children's children.
On Israel, peace! (R.)

Second Reading Heb 2:9-11

*He who sanctifies, and those who are sanctified
have one origin.*

We see in Jesus one who was for a short while made lower than the angels and is now crowned with glory and splendour because he submitted to death; by God's grace he had to experience death for all mankind.

As it was his purpose to bring a great many of his sons into glory, it was appropriate that God, for whom everything exists and through whom everything exists, should make perfect, through suffering, the leader who would take them to their salvation. For the one who sanctifies, and the ones who are sanctified, are of the same stock; that is why he openly calls them brothers.

Gospel Acclamation 1 Jn 4:12

Alleluia, alleluia!

*If we love one another,
God will live in us in perfect love.
Alleluia!*