



Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time † Sunday 7th October 2018

In England & Wales: For CAFOD and the Harvest, the Fruits of Human Work, reverent use of Creation, and the Synod of Bishops
Keynote: God's covenant of oneness in love

Book of Genesis 2: 18-24

Men and women are not solitary creatures, they need the support and companionship that each has to offer. *'The Lord God said: "It is not good that man should live alone. I will make him a helpmate." So the Lord God built the rib he had taken... into a woman, and brought her to the man.'* This reading sets out the Old Testament view of the man-woman relationship, and the place it has in creation. The attraction of man and women for each other is seen as a gift – a God given blessing, and their unity, in the bond of lasting love, is seen as a sign of the eternal covenant that also exists between God and his people. *'That.'* the author concludes *'is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife, and they become one body.'*

Responsorial Psalm 127 (128): 1-6 – Thanksgiving for the blessings of God in home life

Letter to the Hebrews 2: 9–11

'We see in Jesus one who was for a short while made lower than the angels and is now crowned with glory... because he submitted to death... for all mankind.' Christ, in lowering his dignity, to become man, not only demonstrates his love for us, but also in virtue of his understanding of human nature, and by being one of us, is better placed to win our freedom. *'As it was his purpose to bring a great many of his sons (and daughters) into glory,'* says the author of this letter. Truly our brother, Christ is the one who makes us holy, and brings us salvation.

Gospel according to Mark 10: 2-16

This gospel passage is in two parts. The first, Jesus' teaching on marriage and divorce, and the second tells us of Jesus' attitude towards children. The Pharisees were setting a trap for Jesus in asking him about that 'difficult' divorce topic of Mosaic Law. It is also a question we face today. Jesus' reply sets out the ideal and perfect nature of human marriage, *'from the beginning of creation God made them male and female, and the two became one body. They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So what God has united, man must not divide.'* This is the ideal, frequently to be seen in the aspiration of any young couple in love. Later the disciples question Jesus about this teaching. We may have questions too, and may wish to soften Jesus' words with the gentleness and mercy he shows on other occasions in the gospel. When the disciples try to send the children away, Jesus is indignant, *'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them.'* Maybe, Jesus' teaching about married love is best seen in the context of the joint parental responsibility to provide a stable home for their children. The covenant of married love then has a deeper dimension, and an enriched meaning. The covenant of marriage is often seen as a sign of the covenant and bonding relationship between Christ and the Church – the bride of Christ.

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