



# LIVING THE GOSPEL

**27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time  
October 6<sup>th</sup> 2024**

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**Theme: "God made them male and female...and the two shall become one flesh."**

## **Gathering Prayer**

**All:** Almighty ever-living God, who in the abundance of your kindness surpass the merits and the desires of those who entreat you, pour out your mercy upon us to pardon what conscience dreads and to give what prayer does not dare to ask. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## **Exploring the Word**

### **Gospel Reading: Mark 10:2-16**

<sup>2</sup> And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" <sup>3</sup> He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" <sup>4</sup> They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to put her away." <sup>5</sup> But Jesus said to them, "For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. <sup>6</sup> But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' <sup>7</sup> 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, <sup>8</sup> and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. <sup>9</sup> What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder."

<sup>10</sup> And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. <sup>11</sup> And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; <sup>12</sup> and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

<sup>13</sup> And they were bringing children to him, that he might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. <sup>14</sup> But when Jesus saw it he was indignant, and said to them, "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. <sup>15</sup> Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." <sup>16</sup> And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.

## **Gospel Focus**

When marriage is good, it is really, really good. When marriage is hard, it is really, really hard. Both these truths come from the reality that Jesus preaches here—the oneness of spouses means that they are uniquely capable of hurting each other. That is why marriage is an ongoing commitment; husbands and wives need to commit daily to treating each other with care. They make the choice to marry not just once but every day, choosing each other again and again. The newly wed feeling of being "in love" often mellows over time, leaving in its stead love as a virtue, love that chooses the good of the other even when the emotional payoff is lessened. Good marriages do not just

happen; they take continuous work and tireless communication. Jesus reminds us that this work is worth it.

## **Gospel Reflection**

While no statistics are available for first-century Palestine, divorce was not uncommon. However, marriage practices and attitudes toward marriage were considerably different from our own. In their patriarchal social system, marriages were arranged between families, to strengthen the social cohesion between the two clans. The terms were negotiated between the groom and his father and the father of the bride. Divorce would mean a messy separation of the two families and would bring shame on the family of the bride, since in Jewish tradition, only a man could initiate divorce.

It is in this context that the Pharisees “test” Jesus about the law concerning divorce. The only text in the Torah that deals with divorce is Deuteronomy 24: 1-4, where Moses declares that a man who becomes displeased with his wife because he finds in her “something objectionable” may write her a bill of divorce, hand it to her, and dismiss her from his house. The meaning of the Hebrew term used here had long been debated by the rabbis. In the time of Jesus, some important teachers interpreted it strictly, as meaning only sexual misconduct, whereas others thought it allowed even for spoiling a meal. Jesus’ response is startling. He interprets Deuteronomy 24 as a concession on the part of Moses to the people’s hardness of heart and redirects them to the ideal put forth in Genesis 2. He underscores the divine intent for the oneness and harmonious relations among all creatures, most especially human beings, male and female created by God’s image and likeness.

The creation of woman in Genesis 2: 18-24 has often been misinterpreted in misogynistic ways; that the creation of woman as second and from the man’s side, makes her subordinate to and derivative from him. Moreover, the Hebrew phrase in verse 18 has been poorly rendered in some translations as “helpmate,” making the sole purpose of woman’s creation to be an aid in man’s work. Most recent translations have rightly rendered it as “suitable partner” (NABRE, as we hear in today’s reading) or “a helper as his partner” (NRSV). These capture the nuances of the Hebrew words for “strength, indispensable aid,” often used of God’s saving help, and for “corresponding to.” As a myth of origins, Genesis 2 tells of how human beings came to be and how male and female relate to one another with mutuality and partnership. Having been created from man’s side, woman is to stand alongside him as his equal. As the man’s exclamation in verse 22 affirms, she corresponds to him exactly. She is strong just like him (“bones of my bones”), weak like him (“flesh from my flesh”). Jesus quotes this text to his opponents, changing the focus from divorce to God’s original intent for oneness and mutual correspondence. Just as later Christians would come to understand God as Three-in-One, so the unity of man and woman in marriage reflects this sacred unbreakable oneness.

The reasons not all marriages reflect this sacred unity are many. When the ideal cannot be realized, it is equally important to remember Jesus’ insistence on compassion, forgiveness and unconditional love

## **Old/New Testament and CCC links**

### **First Reading — Genesis 2:18-24**

<sup>18</sup> Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.” <sup>19</sup> So out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. <sup>20</sup> The man

gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper fit for him. <sup>21</sup> So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; <sup>22</sup> and the rib which the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup> Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." <sup>24</sup> Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.

### **Responsorial Reading — Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6**

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

Blessed are you who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways!  
For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork; blessed shall you be, and favored. **(R)**

Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the recesses of your home;  
your children like olive plants around your table. **(R)**

Behold, thus is the man blessed who fears the Lord.  
The Lord bless you from Zion: may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem  
all the days of your life. **(R)**

May you see your children's children. Peace be upon Israel! **(R)**

### **Second Reading — Hebrews 2:9-11**

<sup>9</sup> But we do see Jesus "crowned with glory and honor" because he suffered death, he who "for a little while" was made "lower than the angels," that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

<sup>10</sup> For it was fitting that he, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the leader to their salvation perfect through suffering. <sup>11</sup> He who consecrates and those who are being consecrated all have one origin. Therefore, he is not ashamed to call them "brothers,"

### **Catechism of The Catholic Church**

**1639.** The consent by which the spouses mutually give and receive one another is sealed by God himself. (Cf. Mk 10:9) From their covenant arises "an institution, confirmed by the divine law, . . . even in the eyes of society." (GS 48 # 1) The covenant between the spouses is integrated into God's covenant with man: "Authentic married love is caught up into divine love." (GS 48 # 2)

**1650.** - Today there are numerous Catholics in many countries who have recourse to civil divorce and contract new civil unions. In fidelity to the words of Jesus Christ - "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery" (Mk 10:11-12) the Church maintains that a new union cannot be recognized as valid, if the first marriage was. If the divorced are remarried civilly, they find themselves in a situation that objectively contravenes God's law. Consequently, they cannot receive Eucharistic communion as long as this situation persists. For the same reason, they cannot exercise certain ecclesial responsibilities. Reconciliation through the sacrament of Penance can

be granted only to those who have repented for having violated the sign of the covenant and of fidelity to Christ, and who are committed to living in complete continence.

**2364.** The married couple forms "the intimate partnership of life and love established by the Creator and governed by his laws; it is rooted in the conjugal covenant, that is, in their irrevocable personal consent."(GS 48 # 1) Both give themselves definitively and totally to one another. They are no longer two; from now on they form one flesh. The covenant they freely contracted imposes on the spouses the obligation to preserve it as unique and indissoluble. (Cf. CIC, can. 1056) "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder."(Mk 10:9; cf. Mt 19:1-12; 1 Cor 7: 10-11)

**2380.** *Adultery* refers to marital infidelity. When two partners, of whom at least one is married to another party, have sexual relations - even transient ones - they commit adultery. Christ condemns even adultery of mere desire.(Cf. Mt 5:27-28) The sixth commandment and the New Testament forbid adultery absolutely.(Cf. Mt 5:32; 19:6; Mk 10:11; 1 Cor 6:9-10) The prophets denounce the gravity of adultery; they see it as an image of the sin of idolatry.(Cf. Hos 2:7; Jer 5:7; 13:27)

**2382.** - The Lord Jesus insisted on the original intention of the Creator who willed that marriage be indissoluble. (Cf. Mt 5:31-32; 19:3-9; Mk 10:9; Lk 16:18; 1 Cor 7:10-11.) He abrogates the accommodations that had slipped into the old Law. (Cf. Mt 19:7-9.) Between the baptized, "a ratified and consummated marriage cannot be dissolved by any human power or for any reason other than death."

### **Sharing and Discussion**

1. The creation of human beings is the climax of God's creation. Which means human beings have a responsibility for the rest of creation. How can we exercise this responsibility?
2. In the gospel speaks about the hardness of heart, what are the likely reasons for someone to develop a hardened heart? What are the possible remedies?
3. How does the quality of a marriage either facilitate or hinder children's ability to come to Jesus? Can it influence the spiritual life and well-being of a community?

### **Closing Prayer**

**All:** Liberating God, you sent your Son Jesus to be our savior and guide. Hear our prayers that by his example, we live lives of service and justice. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Leader:** May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil and bring us to everlasting life.

**All:** Amen.

**Living The Gospel bible study/sharing via Zoom.**  
**Every Wednesday**  
**Time: 8 – 9.30 pm**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2760073734?pwd=cDRZR2JQMGRobVkwY3ZVF5L1BwZz09>**

**Meeting ID: 276 007 3734**  
**Passcode: 1WordOfGod**

**All are welcome!**

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**References:**

- (1) Gospel Notes are taken from The Navarre Bible
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