

Two Shall Become One

Gen.; Ps. 1 2: 7ab, 15, 18-24; Ps. 128; Heb. 2: 9-11; Mk. 10: 2-16

If we have learned nothing else during this time of pandemic, we learned that we are social creatures. We need to interact directly with other people. We may have our computers, tablets and phones. We may participate in meetings via Zoom or Teams. We may meet each other through FaceTime and other social media platforms. But still, we crave face-to-face meetings and the opportunity for physical contact. Fortunately for those who are married and have families, their needs for social contact were met to some degree even when they could not leave their homes to meet with friends.

The First Reading for this Sunday paints an idyllic picture of life in the Garden. We are presented with a second account of the creation story. God had created everything on the earth, the seas, the land, the plants, the animals, and man. He saw that everything was good but not quite perfect because the man was lonely since he did not have a partner. So God created woman and gave her to the man as his companion and helpmate. This is the first marriage recorded in the Bible.

In the Gospel, Jesus speaks to the Pharisees about marriage referring back to the creation story saying: 'God made them male and female'. He also said that a man shall be 'joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate.'

Jesus also addresses a subject that we are all too familiar with, the realities of separation and divorce. In the time of Moses, a man could dismiss his wife simply by giving her a formal certificate. However, Jesus came out against remarriage after divorce, saying that the man and woman were committing the sin of adultery. Jesus knew that, at that time, a divorced woman would become destitute because she had no means of support. Therefore, divorce was to be avoided. Even today, divorce can result in women and single mothers living in poverty.

But there is another reason for Jesus speaking about maintaining the indissolubility of marriage. He was speaking about marriage in mystical terms referring to the mystical marriage between Himself and the Church, with Jesus as the Bridegroom and the Church as His Bride. He was foreshadowing His departure from the world and telling us that He would always be one with the Church and that, regardless of circumstances, regardless of the sins committed in the Church, he would be joined to the Church perpetually and would never abandon it. The Two shall become One.

And this should give us confidence in the knowledge that, in spite of our sinfulness, God will never give us a writ of dismissal. He will never 'divorce' us. He will always remain faithful to us, even if we are not always faithful to Him. He will always be waiting for us with open arms in the sacraments of the Church especially the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist.

And so we are able to pray, as we did in the Collect for the Mass this Sunday: 'Almighty ever-living God...pour out your mercy upon us to pardon what conscience dreads and to give what prayer does not dare to ask.' Even if we feel cast adrift from our friends and, at times, our family during this pandemic, we know that God is always at our side to meet us and to lavish His mercy over us without the need for technological assistance.