

A reading from the Book of Genesis

The Lord God said: “It is not good for the man to be alone.

I will make a suitable partner for him.”

So the Lord God formed out of the ground

various wild animals and various birds of the air,

and he brought them to the man to see what he would call them;

whatever the man called each of them would be its name.

The man gave names to all the cattle,

all the birds of the air, and all wild animals;

but none proved to be the suitable partner for the man.

So the Lord God cast a deep sleep on the man,

and while he was asleep,

he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.

The Lord God then built up into a woman the rib

that he had taken from the man.

When he brought her to the man, the man said:

“This one, at last, is bone of my bones

and flesh of my flesh;

This one shall be called ‘woman,’

for out of ‘her man’ this one has been taken.”

That is why a man leaves his father and mother

and clings to his wife,

and the two of them become one body.

**The Word of the Lord.** *R. Thanks be to God*

### **Commentary**

This second version of creation is vastly different from the first. God creates man first, and then the birds, wild animals, and other life forms – the very opposite from the previous account. Yet even with an abundance of natural life surrounding the man, something fundamental is lacking. This passage highlights the importance of human relationships, and the need for a strong society – one that begins with men and women in committed, mutually loving relationships.

As Catholics we do not look to the Bible’s creation story for biological truths. Physicians attest that men and women have equal pairs of ribs. (In an ancient language, one word meant both “rib” and “life.”) From the ‘man’ comes ‘wo-man’. This passage leads one to ponder a deeper, spiritual truth. Between men and women there is an intimate connectedness, radical unity and kinship, as well as sexual attraction. When the two come together, especially in the sacredness of marriage, their connection is so life-giving, that all other relationships are secondary – even the link to parents who initially provided life. This passage is a biblical meditation on the more contemporary phrase that one’s spouse is “my soul mate.”