

Twenty Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time October 3, 2021

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

First Reading: Genesis 2:18-24

¹⁸ Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ 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. ²¹ 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; ²² and the rib which the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ 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." ²⁴ Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh..

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6

R. (cf. 5) 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. May the Lord bless us all the days of our lives.

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

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

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 the Lord bless us all the days of our lives.

May you see your children's children.
Peace be upon Israel!

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

Second Reading: Hebrews 2:9-11

⁹ But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for every one. ¹⁰ For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering. ¹¹ For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brethren, ...

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Gospel: Mark 10:2-16

² And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" ³ He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" ⁴ They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to put her away." ⁵ But Jesus said to them, "For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.

⁶ But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' ⁷ 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, ⁸ and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. ⁹ What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder."

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

¹³ And they were bringing children to him, that he might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." ¹⁶ And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.

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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God...

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

Even in my short lifetime attitudes regarding divorce have been turned upside down. Not too long ago divorce was avoided and was entered into only as a last resort, and then with shame and regret. Today divorce is commonplace and sometimes even brazenly celebrated. Coupled with this change in attitude has come unashamed willingness to live together before, and without marriage, and have children outside of marriage, even among some Catholic Christians. We should not be surprised that marriage is under attack, for out of all of life Jesus chose marriage as the image that best illustrates his relationship with those he died to redeem. So, in a very real sense Christian marriage is an icon of Jesus Christ. An icon is a visible representation of an eternal truth. Consequently, when a Christian couple's marriage is constant and true in spite of life's difficulties and storms, people will look at them and conclude that Jesus' love is also constant and true. Conversely, when two Christians give up on their partner either out of selfishness, or from despair, and dissolve their marriage, people will look at them and conclude that Jesus' love is also dissolvable. That is why we must stem the tide of failed marriages, even while we extend arms of grace and love to those who have experienced divorce. Surprisingly, the place to stem the tide is not merely with marriage counseling, though that is vital and important for couples currently in the midst of problems. We must stem the tide by changing the cultural mores regarding marriage and divorce prior to dating, engagement, and marriage. Someone has said, "healthy people make healthy marriages." This simple statement strikes at the heart of the problem. Unless each individual in the marriage partnership, is independently committed to following Jesus Christ at all cost, and committed to life-long growth in Christ and practical application of his truths and character to their life, it is doubtful that a healthy Christian marriage will ensue. For marriage unites two imperfect individuals, who bring into their marriage not only their assets and gifts but also their faults, flaws, and woundedness. Only Christianity provides the values, principles, and the power to live as one ought to live in a godly relationship between two imperfect people. Consequently, to stem the tide of divorce we must begin by being and developing life-long disciples through Christian formation. By being a life-long disciple we ourselves will be on a positive growth curve of spirituality, learning to live as we ought to with our mates, and with the people in our world. This by itself becomes a powerful teaching example to the coming generations. However, we need to go a step further by encouraging and inviting our children, family, and friends to join us in a life of discipleship and formation. Marriage is too important as a sacrament and sign of Jesus' love to allow its meaning to degenerate into a temporary, meaningless arrangement. "This is where Christian marriage differs from non-Christian marriage. For Christians, marriage like all of life, is not simply concerned with what we personally can figure out, but should be concerned with re-configuring our beliefs and behavior to conform to what is Christ's good and perfect will, rather than our own opinion. "The best preparation for being a godly husband or wife is to major on being the kind of person to whom God would gladly entrust in marriage the life of one of his choicest sons or daughters. Individuals who devote their life to following God and growing as his disciple and who cultivate a heart devoted to pleasing Christ in all things will be wonderfully prepared to take on the responsibilities of being a godly spouse."

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INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

First Reading

1. How does the Genesis passage help to define loneliness?
2. What does “leaving” one’s parents and “cleaving” to one’s wife mean to you?

Second Reading

3. What can we learn from Jesus’ example about dealing with our mate’s (or friends, or families) imperfections?

Gospel Reading

4. What did Jesus mean when saying that divorce was allowed by Moses because of their hardness of heart?
5. What are the positive reasons why people should avoid divorce?
6. Describe what you feel should be the Christian’s attitude toward marriage.
7. How does the quality of our marriage either open the door for our children to come to Jesus, or hinder their coming to Him?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another’s openness and sensitivity. Conclude with a final prayer.