

27th Sunday of the Year B

*As long as we love one another,
God will live in us
and his love will be complete in us. (1 Jn 4:12b)*



First Reading

Genesis 2:18-24

The Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helpmate." So from the soil the Lord God fashioned all the wild beasts and all the birds of heaven. These he brought to the man to see what he would call them; each one was to bear the name the man would give it. The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of heaven and all the wild beasts. But no helpmate suitable for man was found for him. So the Lord God made the man fall into a deep sleep. And while he slept, he took one of his ribs and enclosed it in flesh. The Lord God built the rib he had taken from the man into a woman, and brought her to the man. The man exclaimed: "This at last is bone from my bones, and flesh from my flesh! This is to be called woman, for this was taken from man." This is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife, and they become one body.

Second Reading

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 and splendour because he submitted to death; by God's grace he had to experience death for all mankind. As it was his purpose to bring a great many of sons and daughters into glory, it was appropriate that God, for whom everything exists and through whom everything exists, should make perfect, through suffering, the leader who would take them to their salvation. For the one who sanctifies, and the ones who are sanctified, are of the same stock; that is why he openly calls them brothers.

Some Pharisees approached Jesus and asked, "Is it against the law for a man to divorce his wife?" They were testing him. He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" "Moses allowed us" they said "to draw up a writ of dismissal and so to divorce." Then Jesus said to them, "It was because you were so unteachable that he wrote this commandment for you. But from the beginning of creation God made them male and female. This is why a man must leave father and mother, and the two become one body. They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide." Back in the house the disciples questioned him again about this, and he said to them, "The man who divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another she is guilty of adultery too."

Meditation

In today's gospel the Pharisees again attempt to trap Jesus in the intricacies of the Law. Jesus' response turns the question from legalism to the true nature of marriage. He cites two passages from Genesis concerning human creation. The first, "God created the human person in his image; male and female he created them," establishes the union of man and woman in their likeness to God. The second, "This one, at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh... That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife and the two of them become one flesh," presents woman as the suitable partner for man and the gift of God to him. The description of woman's creation from man's flesh explains the longing and the union of mutual love between man and woman.

The prophets portray the love of God for his people as the love of a husband for his wife. In covenant fidelity God continues to care for Israel. Even when she betrays him to follow other gods, he remains faithful to her. He calls her back and renews his espousal to her.

This bond of marriage also symbolizes the love of Christ for his Church. He loves her as his own body. She, on her part, prepares for him and awaits the day when he will return to take her as a bride into the wedding banquet of the kingdom.

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People were bringing little children to him, for him to touch them. The disciples turned them away, but when Jesus saw this he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." Then he put his arms round them, laid his hands on them and gave them his blessing.

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