

**October 4, 2009**

**Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary  
Time B**

**Reading 1  
Gn 2:18-24**

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 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.**

**Reading II  
Heb 2:9-11**

Brothers and sisters:

He "for a little while" was made "lower than the angels," that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

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.

He who consecrates and those who are being consecrated all have one origin.

Therefore, he is not ashamed to call them "brothers."

**Gospel  
Mk 10:2-16 or 10:2-12**

The Pharisees approached Jesus and asked, "Is it lawful for a husband to divorce his wife?" They were testing him.

He said to them in reply, "What did Moses command you?"

They replied,

"Moses permitted a husband to write a bill of divorce and dismiss her."

But Jesus told them,

"Because of the hardness of your hearts he wrote you this commandment.

But from the beginning of creation, *God made them male and female.*

*For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother*

*and be joined to his wife,*

*and the two shall become one flesh.*

So they are no longer two but one flesh.

Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate."

In the house the disciples again questioned Jesus about this.

He said to them,

"Whoever divorces his wife and marries another

commits adultery against her;  
and if she divorces her husband and marries  
another,  
she commits adultery."

And people were bringing children to him that  
he might touch them,  
but the disciples rebuked them.

When Jesus saw this he became indignant and  
said to them,

"Let the children come to me;  
do not prevent them, for the kingdom of God  
belongs to  
such as these.

Amen, I say to you,  
whoever does not accept the kingdom of God  
like a child  
will not enter it."

Then he embraced them and blessed them,  
placing his hands on them.

**Sophomores: LW 1.5: Due Monday, October 5, 2009. Type your answers using complete sentences. Be sure to label your work.**

1. Ok, fasten your seat belts! The Gospel pericope for October 4, 2009 is a very challenging one indeed. RELAX. Read the Gospel pericope for the 27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time B. What are your initial thoughts and feeling about this Gospel pericope? Explain. It's O.K. if you have more questions than answers at this point.

2. Read the First Reading for Sunday, October 4, 2009. What is the connection between this pericope and the Gospel pericope you just reflected on? (Don't think too hard.)

3. World of the Text Questions: Who initiates a conversation with Jesus in Mk 10:2? How is the conversation initiated? What was Jesus doing when the conversation was initiated? How does Jesus reply? (Hint some of us use this technique all the time.)

4. Note that Jesus quotes a pericope from the Book of Genesis in his conversation with the Pharisees. Why would that be a good approach for Jesus to take with these men? (World Behind the Text)

5. Notice the "scene change" in Mk 10:10-16. Where is Jesus in Mk 10:10-16, and who is with him? (World of the Text)

Hopefully by doing the above exercises you see another of Mark's techniques (World of the Text) of arranging his text into threes: (1) Jesus and the Pharisees converse. (2) Jesus converses with his disciples about adultery. (3) Jesus once again tells his disciples to be like children.

Guess what? The First Century understanding of marriage and divorce is not the same as our understanding of it. (World Behind the Text) Thank goodness! In the ancient world, a man could be unfaithful to his wife with no penalty. However, a wife could not be unfaithful. What is happening is that many men were ABUSING the divorce laws! (It is reported that a man could divorce his wife if she burned a meal! Geez, imagine that!) Jesus is trying to correct the wrong and give more power to women. However, the Pharisees are so "hard headed" ("hardness of their hearts" Mk 10:5) that they are blind to this and thus unable to see the injustice. They are more concerned about tripping Jesus up! Jesus is a threat to their plush lifestyles protected by *their* interpretation of the Law. In the marriage context, women were more like "property" than partners (See Gn 2:18) Mark cleverly places another reference to children and their relationship with God to contrast of a disciple and the Jewish leaders. (Have you ever been accused of being "hard headed?" Don't answer that! It's a rhetorical question!) Note, Jesus is raising the status of women and children! No wonder the Pharisees, influential men, who uphold the Law, are all upset and in a tizzy!

At the same time, Jesus does teach about the permanence of marriage. This "sacramental aspect" of marriage was a challenge in the first century and still is today. The point is for a couple to engage in selfless love in order to participate in an unconditional commitment. Is it tough? Sure! The point is that Jesus emphasizes the EQUALITY of men and woman in this relationship. The Church believes that when two people marry they are joined by God. Christ provides the grace to stay married if both parties are willing to receive that grace.

6. Now, compare and contrast your initial thoughts and feeling in Question 1, with your present thoughts and feelings after doing the above work and reading through the material.