

Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

Gospel text (Mk 10,2-16): Some Pharisees came and put him to the test with this question, «Is it right for a husband to divorce his wife?». He replied, «What law did Moses give you?». They answered, «Moses allowed us to write a certificate of dismissal in order to divorce». Then Jesus said to them, «Moses wrote this law for you, because you are stubborn. But in the beginning of creation God made them male and female, and because of this, man has to leave father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one body. So they are no longer two but one body. Therefore let no one separate what God has joined». When they were indoors at home, the disciples again asked him about this and He told them, «Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against his wife, and the woman who divorces her husband and marries another also commits adultery».

People were bringing their little children to him to have him touch them, and the disciples rebuked them for this. When Jesus noticed it, He was very angry and said, «Let the children come to me and don't stop them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it». Then He took the children in his arms and laying his hands on them, blessed them.

«Let no one separate what God has joined»

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Today, the Pharisees want to put Jesus to the test again, and they propose to him the question of divorce. But, instead of giving them a definite answer, Jesus asks them in return what the Scriptures say and, without criticizing Moses' Law, makes them understand that while that Law is legitimate, it is only temporal: «Moses wrote this law for you, because you are stubborn» (Mk 10:5).

Jesus reminds them what Genesis says: «But in the beginning of creation God made them male and female» (Mk 10:6; cf. Gn 1:27). Jesus speaks here of the unity of Humankind. Man will leave father and mother and will join his wife, and the two shall become one flesh to form Mankind. This represents a new reality: Two human beings form a unity, not as an “association”, but as a generator of Humanity. The conclusion is quite evident: «Let no one separate what God has joined» (Mk 10:9).

If we look at marriage as an association, its indissolubility cannot be fathomed. If marriage is just a matter of associated interests, we can then understand its dissolution may appear as legitimate. In this case, speaking of marriage in these terms is disdainful, because it refers only to the association of two single persons who have decided to make their lives more pleasant. When the Lord speaks of marriage He is referring to something else. The Vatican II Council reminds us: «For the good of the spouses and their off-spring as well as of society, the existence of the sacred bond no longer depends on human decisions alone. For, God Himself is the author of matrimony, endowed as it is with various benefits and purposes. All of these have a very decisive bearing on the continuation of the human race» (Gaudium et spes, n. 48).

Back home, the Apostles asked him again about the demands of marriage, and this is followed by the tender scene with the infants. Both passages are related. The second lesson is like a parable that explains how the marriage is possible. The Kingdom of God is for those that become as infants and accept to build something new. And marriage is the same if we really understand what it actually means, that is: to leave, to join and to become.