

Friday of the Nineteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel text (Mt 19:3-12): ... He said in reply, "Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator made them male and female and said, 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, man must not separate..."

Sexuality and marriage: they are sacred!

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, with the Gospel, we look at sexuality as a central reality of Creation. Sexual diversity and marriage (where spouses will give each other their sexual distinctiveness) are sacred. It is not by chance that: 1. God changes His language ("speaking" in the first person plural) when He is going to create man ("Let us make mankind in our image"); and 2. Christ dignifies marriage as a Sacrament and thus, He attends a wedding at the beginning of His Ministry.

The word of God supports this tradition of the Church. Furthermore, in "Genesis" we read that God created us in His image, making us "male" and "female". When two people give each other mutually and, together, they give life to their children, the Sacred is also affected: each person harbors the divine mystery. And so, the coexistence of man and woman also steps into the religious, the sacred, and the responsibility before God.

—God-Creator: you're the "we divine" that inspires and guides the "we human" (marriage).

Man is "incomplete", he is driven by nature to seek in another the part that can make him whole

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Today, Jesus explains that the biblical account of creation speaks of the solitude of Adam, the first man, and God's decision to give him a helper. Of all other creatures, not one is capable of being the helper that man needs, even though he has assigned a name to all the wild beasts and thus made them fully a part of his life. So God forms woman from the rib of man...

Here one might detect hints of ideas that are also found in the myth mentioned by Plato, according to which man was originally spherical, because he was complete in himself and self-sufficient. But as a punishment for pride, he was split in two by Zeus, so that now he longs for his other half, striving with all

his being to possess it and thus regain his integrity.

—While the biblical narrative does not speak of punishment, the idea is certainly present that man is somehow incomplete, driven by nature to seek in another the part that can make him whole.

Corresponding to the image of a monotheistic God is monogamous marriage

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Today, we consider that only in communion with the opposite sex can one become “complete”: “eros” (love-passion) is somehow rooted in man's very nature. Adam is a seeker, who “abandons his mother and father” in order to find woman (cf. Gn 2,23-24); only together do the two represent complete humanity and become “one flesh”.

A second aspect: From the standpoint of creation, “eros” directs man towards marriage, to a bond which is unique and definitive. Thus, and only thus, does it fulfill its deepest purpose. Corresponding to the image of a monotheistic God is monogamous marriage. Marriage based on exclusive and definitive love becomes the icon of the relationship between God and his people and vice versa. God's way of loving becomes the measure of human love.

—This close connection between “eros” and marriage in the Bible has practically no equivalent in extra-biblical literature.