Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

Gospel text (*Mk* 10:2-16): 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.

"What God has joined together, no human being must separate"

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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: "Because of the hardness of your hearts he wrote you this commandment" (Mk 10:5).

Jesus reminds them what Genesis says: "But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female" (Mk 10:6; cf. Gn 1:27). He speaks of a unity that constitutes Humanity. 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 creators of Humanity. The

conclusion is quite evident: “what God has joined together, no human being must separate." (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, as it is merely the association of two single people seeking to make their lives more enjoyable. 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).

Upon returning home, the Apostles asked him again about the demands of marriage, and this is followed by the tender scene with children. These two moments are connected. The second is like a parable explaining how marriage is possible. The Kingdom of God belongs to those who become like children and embrace the creation of something new. Marriage, likewise, when properly understood, is about leaving, uniting, and becoming.

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “When I think of Christian homes, I like to imagine them as being full of the light and joy that were in the home of the Holy Family” (Saint Josemaría)

- “Children also pay the price for immature unions and irresponsible separations: they are the first victims; they suffer the outcome of a culture of exaggerated individual rights” (Francis)

- “The married couple forms "the intimate partnership of life and love established by the Creator and governed by his laws; it is rooted in the conjugal covenant, that is, in their irrevocable personal consent" (Vatican II Council). Both give themselves definitively and totally to one another. They are no longer two; from now on they form one flesh. the covenant they freely contracted imposes on the spouses the obligation to preserve it as unique and indissoluble. "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder." (Mk 10:9)” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, nº 2364)