

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

As we journey in the world, we realize that we exist as female and male, man and woman, that between both there subsists a continual attraction. Where does the attraction as well as the difference come from? What was God's intention by creating us so?

Today's readings try to answer these questions by showing us God's purpose in creating man and woman and by situating marriage between man and woman as corresponding to the divine plan. The 1st reading of the book of Genesis tells that man and woman were created to live together, to love each other, share their lives as partners and form a unity. The way this claim is described in the text shows that solitude is one of the most terrible experiences a human being can undergo. In fact, despite the presence of the beasts surrounding him, man was unhappy, lonely. It is in that moment that God created woman to keep him company and to draw him from loneliness

This shows that men and women have been put together to fill and to complete each other. If a couple fails to achieve this goal, it will always be unhappy though it may share the same house and bed, goods and children, because the primary purpose of marriage is reciprocal love between husband and wife. Loneliness can never be overcome just by living one next to the other, but by sharing our very self. In the same way, sex without love gives only temporary pleasure, and not happiness?

If man and woman are put together it means also that they share a same nature, have equal rights, duties and dignity. This is why they are above all equal partners. This is expressed in the claim of Adam who could not find in the animals a suitable partner and said: "This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh".

Man and woman are put together to fulfill a common plan. This is why, man has to leave his father and mother to be with his wife, and the two become one flesh. In God's plan, man and woman, joined by conjugal love, are no longer two separate individuals, but only one person.

This justifies the response of Jesus to the question of divorce as we heard in the Gospel. First of all, Jesus clarifies the Law of Moses as it is used to back up the divorce. For him, Moses did not give permission to divorce; he simply tried to formulate some rules in order to control a wrong habit already existing and accepted by all. He did so, because the people of Israel were "hard hearted".

In fact, Moses established this rule to protect the woman, by recommending that the husband gives her a writ of dismissal, so that she could remarry. The reason for that was that there were husbands who sent their wives away from home and then took another wife; but if by chance their first wife went with another man, they accused her of adultery, which was punishable by death. The Law of Moses protected woman from such abuse, and the writ of dismissal gave her back her freedom.

However, adds Jesus, the tolerance shown by Moses was not in God's original plan. Man and woman were created to be one person, and humans should not divide what God has united. In other words, divorce as well as polygamy or other forms of conjugal union, though backed up by our culture and society today, do not reflect

God's initial plan. Only monogamous and indissoluble marriage respects the original plan of God and fulfills the aim for which sexuality was created. The same is true about divorced-remarried as well as about lesbians and homosexuals. These are human accommodations which do not correspond to God's plan.

It is not a question here of condemning the divorced or the remarried, or the homosexuals and lesbians as though they were the personification of evil. To come to a decision, as such, of divorce is not a simple matter. It is a huge responsibility that reverses the whole of life of someone and, which leaves scars and hurts in the heart and, sometimes leads to depression. Consequently, I have a deep respect for all these people and the decision they have made for their lives. It is not in my right to condemn them; neither does the Church or the merciful Jesus.

As Jesus was asked about divorce – remarriage, as we heard in the Gospel, he did only remind us of God's plan. He did not set up any court or judge to assess guilt, to condemn, or to apply sanctions. He was respectful of the freedom of the individuals even if he disagreed with them. This is what we too should do. In fact, those who failed in their first marriage have already suffered a lot and need assistance. How could they bear their situation if those who are supposed to help and understand them only criticize and humiliate them?

This is the reason why while the Church recalls that marriage is between man and woman, as well as it is indissoluble, she tries also to understand with compassion those people who live at the margin of God's will, to encourage them to conversion, hoping that one day God's grace will change them for the best. Homosexuals as well as lesbians are God's children and the Church can but love them with the same affection Christ does.

In doing so, the Church acts as Jesus would do, full of understanding and compassion even if she does not share their vision of life. Jesus, who is our brother and our savior, knows all the tribulations of human life and the defects to which, for various reasons, human beings are exposed. Jesus is great, but he is one of us; he did not just feign or pretend to be a man. He had the same feelings of affection and the same emotions. He went through our own experiences, including suffering and death. We can trust a guide like him

May God bless all our families and keep the gift of marriage alive in the middle of crisis. Let us pray for children who suffer from the separation of their parents and for those who have been betrayed in their vows as married couples. May God bless you all!



HomilyDate: October 8, 2006
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Contact: www.mbala.org
Document Name: 20061008homily.pdf