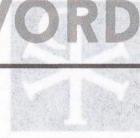


Genesis 2:18-24

Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6

Hebrews 2:9-11

Mark 10:2-16 or 10:2-12



Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

October 6, 2024



REFLECTION

The pain of divorce is not what God intended for us. From the very beginning, God intended marriage to be a faithful, fruitful, and permanent bond of love that unites husband and wife in body, mind, and soul. In this passage, Jesus quotes Genesis and refers to the original state of creation before the Fall (see Genesis 2:24). His words remind us that marriage is a covenant sealed by God, not merely a human convention. This draws our attention to God's original plan: in marriage, "the two shall become one flesh" and "what God has joined together, no human being must separate" (Mark 10:8, 9).

Although we may have experienced the pain of the brokenness of divorce, we can take comfort in the teaching of Jesus—in it we see the intrinsic value of every human person and God's desire for us to be in relationship with him. By resting in this truth, we can work for better human relationships and turn to God for healing of the broken ones in our lives.



ACTION

The Church has many resources to help us understand Jesus' teaching in today's Gospel. One way is by learning about the Theology of the Body, which teaches us about God's plan for human beings to live in a graced relationship with himself and with one another. You can find many resources on this, from videos, to courses, to podcasts. Another way to apply Jesus' teaching to your life is by considering how it affects your current and future dating habits. Again, resources can be found online to help you with your questions. For example, you can search for "dating" on Life Teen's blog (<https://lifeteen.com/blogs/>) and see what advice they offer. Even if you aren't in a romantic relationship right now, it is always important to learn about your relationship with God and give it the time and attention any healthy relationship needs!



Learn more about what Theology of the Body can teach us about the ultimate meaning of life: <https://youtu.be/hZXRSNzITus>

QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How has divorce affected you or someone you know? How can you bring that to prayer?
- ❖ What positive role models for healthy relationships and good marriages do you have?



October 6, 2024

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

LECTIONARY #140B

Genesis 2:18-24

Psalms 128:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6

Hebrews 2:9-11

Mark 10:2-16 or 10:2-12

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

In this week's Gospel, Jesus is questioned by the Pharisees about divorce. Jesus quickly goes to the heart of his teaching, sharing God's original design for marriage. In today's society, many families are affected by divorce and some sensitive questions may arise from this teaching of Jesus. The important message to communicate to the young people is that we should always turn to God for an example of true love and strive to make our actions mirror God's love. This will strengthen our families and our other relationships, and it will help to build up the kingdom of God here on earth.

Q FOCUS: Relationships are hard; love God and love one another and share that love with the world.

Liturgical Calendar Connection

On October 11, the Church celebrates the feast day of Pope John XXIII. He served as pope from 1958-1963 and was canonized in 2014. He was ordained in 1904. During World War I, he served as a stretcher bearer. As a bishop and papal diplomat, he helped save many Jewish lives during World War II. He later became the bishop of Venice and was eventually elected as pope. Friendly and plain speaking, he was greatly loved. He helped resolve the Cuban missile crisis and wrote the encyclical *Pacem in terris* ("Peace

on Earth"). He convened the Second Vatican Council, calling for the Church to reflect on the ways it interacted with the modern world.

Church Teaching Connection

"[Jesus] brings everything back to the beginning, to the beginning of creation, to teach us that God blesses human love, that it is he who joins the hearts of two people who love one another, he who joins them in unity and indissolubility. This shows us that the goal of conjugal life is not simply to live together for life, but to love one another for life! In this way Jesus re-establishes the order which was present from the beginning" (Pope Francis, Homily, October 4, 2015).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Mark 10:2-16

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the sign of the cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

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.

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

In today's Gospel, the Pharisees again try to trap Jesus with a question. This time it is on the topic of divorce. At that time, divorce was legal in certain circumstances, according to the Law of Moses. When asked this question, Jesus asks them to quote this law.

After they cite it, Jesus points to another Scripture passage, one that refers back to before the law was given, to the creation of the world in the Book of Genesis. In doing so, he is pointing to God's original plan for the relationships between husband and wife, that God joins them together and they become one flesh. Jesus wanted them to look beyond the law to the original intent. From the very beginning, God knew

the very important role of a husband and wife in raising a family and in society.

Many people want to be married. They want to be involved in a loving and committed relationship where both parties honor, love, and respect one another. They don't enter into a relationship saying, “I hope this person cheats on me or breaks my heart.” That is not God's plan for marriage, nor is it ours. But we also know that relationships are hard. Unfortunately, many of us have been affected in some way by unhappy marriages or marriages that have ended in divorce. This can be painful, frightening, and can have lasting effects on our ability to trust and to love.

► **What are some things you have done or could do to support a friend who is experiencing the effects of the divorce of their parents?**

The way that we react to situations of divorce or unhappy marriages must reflect the core values of our faith. In all circumstances we are called to show God's love to others and to lead them to a deeper relationship with God. This is what happens in marriages that are flourishing and keep God at their center. They are witnesses of God's plan for life in his kingdom. They exemplify God's love for the Church and for all people. As a sacrament of the Church, marriage is a visible sign of God's sacrificial and enduring love.

The reading ends with a brief encounter between the disciples, some children, and Jesus. We can broaden our focus from discussing marriage to consider how the love of marriage, which strives to mirror the love of God, is also expressed toward the children of the marriage.

► **What are some ways that your family's interactions have taught you how to love well?**

► **What are some areas of your family life that need to be more open to God's loving presence?**

When all the members of our family recognize their need for God's love, we become better witnesses of Christ to those around us. Jesus tells his disciples that they must “accept the kingdom of God like a child.” Just as children are excited about and open to receiving gifts, so should we Christians be excited about and open to receiving the love that is poured out for us in God's kingdom. We respond to God's

gift by sharing it with others through loving actions. By doing this, we are helping to build up the kingdom of God here on earth.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 42.

God is at the center of the sacrament of marriage.

We might experience broken marriages, but we should always keep turning to God's love for a model of what true love is.

We can build up the kingdom of God by sharing God's love with others.

Act on the Word

Building Strong Marriages

For this activity, you will need Bibles, paper, and pens.

If you are able to plan this activity ahead of time, you can invite a married couple from your parish to come speak to the young people about what a healthy marriage is like and how they keep God at the center of their relationship. This activity can be done without the couple.

Begin by having the teens reread the Gospel passage for today (Mark 10:2–16). After reading it, ask them to share their thoughts and reflections on what they learned, building on the discussion they had in the "Reflect the Word" section of today's session. Next, have the young people work in pairs or small

groups and ask them to write down all the qualities they think are important for a strong and healthy marriage.

After finishing, ask each group to share their list with the large group. Then hold a large group discussion about the common qualities and why they are important for a strong marriage. If you were able to invite a married couple to come speak to your group, they can now share their reflections on a healthy marriage and keeping God at its center. Allow the teens to ask the couple questions after they have shared. Finally, ask the teens to reflect on their own lives and share some thoughts on how they can incorporate these qualities into their own relationships and future marriages.

Closing Prayer

*Lord Jesus,
blessed Bridegroom of the Church,
sanctify your people as they await your coming.*

*By your grace, bring the fulfillment and
joy of your love*

*to those who enter into the sacrament
of matrimony.*

Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.ltp.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.