

Daily Reading & Meditation

What God Has Joined Together, Let No Man Put Asunder

SUNDAY 3 OCTOBER 2021 / GOSPEL READING: Mark 10:2-16

2 And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" 3 He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" 4 **They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to put her away."** 5 But Jesus said to them, "For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. 6 But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' 7 **'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,** 8 **and the two shall become one flesh.'** So, they are no longer two but one flesh. 9 **What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.**" 10 And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. 11 And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; 12 and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

13 And they were bringing children to him, that he might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant, and said to them, "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. 15 Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." 16 And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.

Meditation: What is God's intention for our state in life, whether married or single? Jesus deals with the issue of divorce by taking his hearers back to the beginning of creation and to God's plan for the human race. In Genesis 2:23-24 we see God's intention and ideal that two people who marry should become so indissolubly one that they are one flesh. That ideal is found in the unbreakable union of Adam and Eve. They were created for each other and for no one else. They are the pattern and symbol for all who were to come. Jesus explains that Moses permitted divorce as a *concession* in view of a lost ideal.

Jesus sets the high ideal of the married state before those who are willing to accept his commands. Jesus, likewise, sets the high ideal for those who freely renounce marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 19:11-12). Both marriage and celibacy are calls from God to live a consecrated life, that is to live as married couples or as singles who belong not to themselves but to God. Our lives are not our own, but they belong to God. He gives the grace and power to those who seek to follow his way of holiness in their state of life. Do you seek the Lord and his grace in your state of life?

Do you seek to help others draw near to the Lord? The parents who brought their children to Jesus wanted Jesus to lay his hands upon them. They knew of the healing power, both physical and spiritual, which came from Jesus' touch. Jesus, in turn, rebuked his disciples for hindering the children from coming. No doubt the disciples wanted to shield Jesus from the nuisance of noisy children. But Jesus delighted in the children and demonstrated that God's love has ample room for everyone.

No one is unimportant to God. He comes to each person individually that he might touch them with his healing love and power. May we never hinder our youth from coming to the Lord to receive his blessing and healing power. And as we grow with age, may we never lose that child-like simplicity and humility which draws us into Christ's loving presence. Do you show kindness to the youth you

encounter in your neighbourhood, home, and church and do you pray for them that they may grow in the knowledge and wisdom of Jesus Christ?

Psalm 128: 1-6

- 1 Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways!
- 2 You shall eat the fruit of the labour of your hands; you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you.
- 3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table.
- 4 Lo, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD.
- 5 The LORD bless you from Zion! May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life!
- 6 May you see your children's children! Peace be upon Israel!

Daily Quote from the Early Church Fathers: *Mutual servants, equally serving*, by Tertullian, 160-225 A.D.

"Where are we to find language adequately to express the happiness of that marriage which the church cements, the oblation confirms, the benediction signs and seals, the angels celebrate, and the Father holds as approved? For all around the earth young people do not rightly and lawfully wed without their parents' consent. What kind of yoke is that of two believers who share one hope, one desire, one discipline, one service (Ephesians 4:4)? They enjoy kinship in spirit and in flesh. They are mutual servants with no discrepancy of interests. Truly they are 'two in one flesh' (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5; Ephesians 5:31). Where the flesh is one, the spirit is one as well. Together they pray, together bow down, together perform their fasts, mutually teaching, mutually entreating, mutually upholding. In the church of God they hold an equal place (Romans 12:15; 15:6; Galatians 3:28; 1 Corinthians 12:12). They stand equally at the banquet of God, equally in crises, equally facing persecutions, and equally in refreshments. Neither hides anything from the other. Neither neglects the other. Neither is troublesome to the other (Philippians 1:27). (excerpt from *TO HIS WIFE 2.8*)

OPENING PRAYER Lord Jesus Christ, your call to holiness extends to all in every state of life. Sanctify our lives - as married couples and as singles - that we may live as men and women who are consecrated to you. Make us leaven in a society that disdains life-long marriage fidelity, chastity, and living single for the Lord. **Amen.**

CLOSING PRAYER:- World and Covet19. Lord, Look upon the victims of Covet19 throughout the world with eyes of mercy, may your healing hands rest upon them, may your life-giving powers flow into every cell of their bodies and into the depths of their souls, cleansing, purifying, restoring them to wholeness and strength for service in your Kingdom. **Amen!**