

OT-27		homily	Oct 7, 2018
Genesis 2:18-24	Psalms 128	Hebrews 2:9-11	Mark 10:2-16

This weekend the scripture begins with these words to us from God – “It is not good for the man to be alone.” This little phrase gets us to the fundamentals of who we are. One essential thing about our nature is this – we were made for love. And love is communion.

It’s the story of every person. When we are born – we are born to the love of family – father and mother, brothers and sisters, the people around us. Every parent remembers that moment - when the face of their child is revealed after 9 months in the mystery of the womb. The first glimpse of the beautiful face of their child. We are made for love. We are made for communion.

From the time we can crawl and walk we begin exploring the world, learning names for things. We encounter the world. We learn about animals, plants, people, and places. In Genesis, God takes the man and introduces him to nature. Then the man does that thing that is uniquely human, he names everything. He comes into relationship with nature. We are made for love. And love is communion

And we are always seeking. Nature is great – but it isn’t quite enough. The story of the man continues when God puts him into a deep sleep, takes one of his ribs, and forms the woman. What a beautiful image of what God does for us. He places in each of us a desire for love and for communion. And then in Genesis we are given the nuptial image – the man and woman together in a beautiful friendship, a complementarity, the primordial marriage covenant. We were made for love. And love is communion.

But just after the perfect peace and harmony of creation, we human beings have had a problem. In the gospel that little problem is revealed with that trick question the Pharisees asked Jesus. *“Is it lawful for a husband to divorce his wife?”*

Marriage and divorce were issues back then and they certainly are now. Today, the whole identity of marriage and family is under radical revisions in certain quarters of society. We have issues with our relationships.

I love Jesus’ response to them. While he acknowledges the permission in the Mosaic law for a husband to write a bill of divorce and dismiss his wife, he takes the Pharisees back to the basics.

First he diagnoses the problem with this whole thing. Let’s check that out. *“Because of the hardness of your hearts he wrote this commandment.”* Hardness of heart. When you think about it, most every problem that we have in our relationships with others has its roots in hardness of heart. There is something in us that has a tendency to mess up our relationships. It’s true that we are made for love. And love is communion. But stuff gets in the way.

And this is a good point for our reflection. We have all been there are some point. And there are people here today who are going through it right now. So we have to examine ourselves and ask God to show us – where is my hardness of heart? What is that obstinate thing in me that gets in the way. According to “Marriage.com” the top 10 most common reasons for divorce are these things. *Infidelity, money, lack of communication, constant arguing, weight gain, unrealistic expectations, lack of intimacy, lack of equality, not being prepared for marriage, and abuse.* Statistics say that about *half the divorces occur in the first 10 years of marriage, especially between the fourth and eighth anniversary.*

And while marriage is a particular crucible for surfacing our problems in relationships, any close relationship or friendship also reveals those obstinate places within us. Those places that are given to selfishness. Those places where our appetites seem to rule over us rather than the other way around. Those places where we fail to love. Where we fail to enter into communion. In so many ways, we are broken and we need a savior. We need to be restored to love and communion. We need the love of Jesus and his communion.

At the end of the gospel Jesus tells us the rest of the solution. How do we shake off our hardness of heart? It was when the disciples were trying to shoo away the people bringing little children to Jesus for a blessing that he saw the opportunity to show us how.

He said, *“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.”*

Like the smallest children we need to become simple, unpretentious, and humble. We need to remember who we are from the very beginning. We are made for love. We are made for communion. And the reason we gather together each weekend at Mass is so that we might be formed more and more by the love and communion of God. Because the great day is coming for us all. That moment of revelation. When the beautiful face of God, hidden in the mystery of eternity, hidden in the mystery of sacrament, hidden in the mystery of the least of our brothers and sisters, is revealed fully to us.