

# Scripture Study

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time—Cycle B



## Opening prayer

Genesis 2:18-24

(Psalm 128:1-6)

Hebrews 2:9-11

Mark 10:2-16

## Overview of the Gospel:

- Having gone from Galilee “to Judea, beyond the Jordan” (verse 1), Jesus resumes his teaching to his Apostles about discipleship, beginning in verse 13.
- He is interrupted, however, by some Pharisees who have a question about the legality of divorce. This may have been an attempt to trap him: John the Baptist, who had been baptizing in that same area (Mark 1:9) had just recently paid with his life for his taking a public stand on the issue of King Herod’s divorce (Mark 6:17-29).
- The Pharisees point to Deuteronomy 24:1-4, the Law of Moses, to support their case (verse 3). This piece of legislation was not an actual *command* to divorce as the Pharisees seemed to interpret it, but as a concession by Moses to the hardheartedness of the culture, where divorce had become taken for granted and women were as a result victimized.
- In response to their citing the Scriptures to support the practice of divorce, Jesus reaches even further back into the Scripture (Genesis 1:27, 2:24) to reveal to them God’s original plan for marriage and, amazingly, *on his own authority*, sets the higher Christian standard for marriage (verses 9, 11-12).

## Questions:

- In the Second Reading, when Jesus tasted death for the entire human family, of what was his act representative (Philippians 2:8; Ephesians 5:2; CCC 624)? What is the possible background for the expression “taste death” (see Genesis 3:17-19)?
- According to the passages of Genesis to which Jesus alludes in verses 6-8, what are the three characteristics of the marital bond in God’s original plan for marriage? Why can it not be broken by any civil or religious authority? (see also Matthew 5:32, 19:9, and 1 Corinthians 7:10-16)
- How might the issue of divorce illustrate hardness of heart? How does acceptance of God’s plan remove hardness of heart? What is the connection between Jesus’ blessing of the children and the prohibition of divorce in verses 11-12?
- Does our society teach us to regard some people as having more worth than others (verses 13-16)? Whom do we honor? Whom do we imitate? Why do you think Jesus specifically sought out those who, like children, were powerless? What are some ways in which, you, too, can seek out those most in need?

**Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 1603, 1640, 2382-86; 1250-52, 2222**

## Closing prayer

*The state of marriage is one that requires more virtue and constancy than any other: it is a perpetual exercise of mortification.* -St. Francis de Sales

**Remember to read and meditate on the daily Mass readings!**

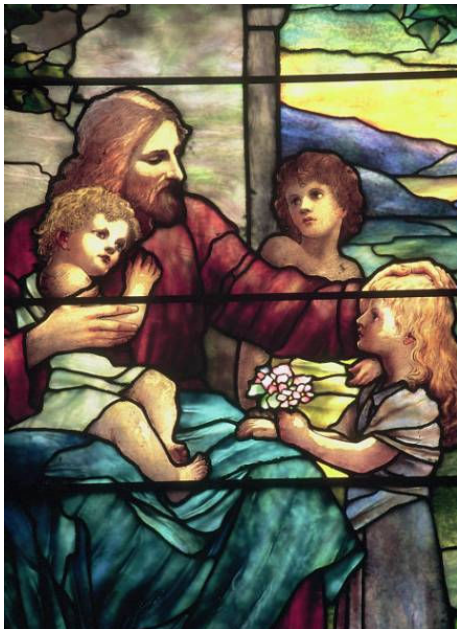
# "What God has joined together, let no man put asunder"

**Scripture:** *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 neighborhood, home, and church and do you pray for them that they may grow in the knowledge and wisdom of Jesus Christ?

*"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".*

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