

Homily for 27TH Sunday Year B Fr. Michael Gathuku.

Many of the world religions have stories which account for the beginning of creation and human origins, these stories in many cases do attempt to validate these religions origins. The book of Genesis which literally means “beginning” presents us with two such stories. The second of which we hear in today’s first reading. God fashions man of dust from the soil and then breathes into his nostrils a breath of life. God created a human; He embodies in this person the whole humanity. He is not one human being among many; he is the Human. God makes the man fall into a deep sleep and then takes something from him. What God took from the man, He used to create a new creature, a woman.

The bible tells us when the man saw the woman, he exclaimed “this at last is bone from my bones and flesh from my fresh! This is to be called woman, for this was taken from man. From the original man came two creatures (Man and woman). The original human was dissolved. Therefore, a man leaves his father and mother and joins his wife, and they become one body. The above statement is the basis of marriage, in marriage two separate human beings become one body, only in marriage do we capture the origin completion of the total human in one body.

This original vision of unity and completion is the basis of our today’s Gospel. In the Gospel reading some pharisees ask Jesus if it is against the law for a man to divorce his wife? Jesus asks his interrogators what Moses commanded; they reply that Moses permitted it. The concession given by Moses was to free the divorced woman to be married again. In the Jewish Law divorce was man’s prerogative, a woman could sue, asking the court to compel her husband to divorce her, but ultimately it was the man to divorce her. There was little agreement about the grounds for divorce, not surprisingly divorce was so common in the time of Jesus, and marriage offered little security for a woman who could be dismissed at her husband’s whim. Jesus seeks to change this.

In His answer to the Pharisees Jesus does not question the validity of the Law of Moses but says that was as a concession to human sinfulness. Jesus reminded His interrogators of God’s original plan for marriage as it is stated in Genesis; that man and woman were to be united in an indissoluble bond. For Jesus, what God intended from the beginning about marriage is what is specified in Genesis.

Clearly this concession to human sinfulness is not Gods original plan of marriage, from the beginning marriage were meant for life. Jesus’ argument is pitched to restore marriage as a serious life-long commitment, these arguments also protect the woman from being treated as a disposable possession by her husband.

The heart of Jesus goes out to the victims of broken marriages not only the couples, but others who are involved in the broken relationship, especially the children who have no say on the matter. Jesus’ mercy reaches to couples who are troubled, whose unions seems shaky, and He has compassion on them. In our modern world and many societies marriage is diluted, and divorce has become the order of the day, this should not be the case. Jesus invites us to go back to the root of marriage and its intention. Men and women are invited to see their commitment to each other in the light of God’s, to try as much as possible to live in loyalty to Gods original call.

Experience teaches us, that things do go wrong, people do make mistakes, problems do occur, and people are hurt. Marriages do collapse, spouses do become victims of oppression and individuals are wounded. We all agree that there are myriads of human failures and some people become casualties because of these failures and inadequacy. Nevertheless, the Church submits to the vision of Jesus, and that vision remains the norm. The Church believes and teaches that marriage is a sacrament and should be understood as so, which should be protected at all cost.

Today our prayers go to all families especially those struggling.