



Celebrate

Sunday, October 3, 2021
19th Sunday after Pentecost

Today's gospel combines a saying that makes many of us uncomfortable with a story we find comforting. Jesus' saying on divorce is another of his rejections of human legislation in favor of the original intent of God's law. Jesus' rebuke of the disciples who are fending off the children should challenge us as well. What does it mean to receive the kingdom of God as a child does?

Prayer of the Day

Sovereign God, you have created us to live in loving community with one another. Form us for life that is faithful and steadfast, and teach us to trust like little children, that we may reflect the image of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

First Reading

Genesis 2:18-24

Genesis 2 stresses that people are not meant to live in isolation but in relationship. Out of love for humanity, God creates them male and female, to provide companionship for each other and to become with each other "one flesh." The Hebrew words used here are ish (man) and ishshah (woman).

The LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner."¹⁸ So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.²⁰ The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner.²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon

the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.²² And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

²³ Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
this one shall be called Woman,
for out of Man this one was
taken."

²⁴ Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Second Reading

Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12

Quoting from the psalms, this passage from Hebrews emphasizes that Jesus, the one through whom God created everything and who sits at God's right hand, is also the one who experienced human suffering and death in order to blaze the path of salvation for us.

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets,² but in these last days he has spoken to

us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds.³ He is the reflection

continued



You crown us with glo - ry and hon - or.

- O¹ LORD our Lord,
 how majestic is your name in¹ all the earth!—
- ²**you whose glory is chanted above the heavens
 out of the mouths of in-¹fants and children;
 you have set up a fortress against your enemies,
 to silence the foe¹ and avenger.**
- ³When I consider your heavens, the work¹ of your fingers,
 the moon and the stars you have set¹ in their courses,
⁴**what are mere mortals that you should be mind-¹ful of them,
 human beings that you should¹ care for them? R**
- ⁵Yet you have made them little less¹ than divine;
 with glory and hon-¹or you crown them.
- ⁶**You have made them rule over the works¹ of your hands;
 you have put all things un-¹der their feet:**
- ⁷all¹ flocks and cattle,
 even the wild beasts¹ of the field,
⁸**the birds of the air, the fish¹ of the sea,
 and whatever passes along the paths¹ of the sea.**
- ⁹O¹ LORD our Lord,
 how majestic is your name in¹ all the earth! **R**

of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

^{2:5}Now God did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels. ⁶But someone has testified somewhere,

"What are human beings that you are mindful of them,
or mortals, that you care for them?

⁷You have made them for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned them with glory and honor,

⁸subjecting all things under their feet."

Now in subjecting all things to them, God left nothing outside their control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to them, ⁹but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

¹⁰It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹²saying,

"I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters,
in the midst of the congregation
I will praise you."

Gospel

Mark 10:2-16

Jesus announced and enacted in history the new reality of God's surprising activity. These two stories demonstrate this new reality: Women and children are accepted and valued, not dismissed as inferior to adult men.

Some Pharisees came, and to test [Jesus] they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" ³He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" ⁴They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her." ⁵But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. ⁶But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' ⁷For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, ⁸and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

¹⁰Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. ¹¹He said to

them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; ¹²and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

¹³People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. ¹⁴But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. ¹⁵Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." ¹⁶And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Made children and heirs of God's promise, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Holy One, you have raised up faithful leaders throughout history. Empower those discerning a call to ministry and all seminarians (*specific individuals known to the congregation may be named*), that they continue to be formed for the sake of the gospel. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You have established a diverse and beautiful creation. Revive declining species and preserve endangered lands. Cultivate in us a sense of wonder for the world you created. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You desire for us not to be alone and to live in community with one another. Strengthen relationships between nations and peoples, that we celebrate and support one human family. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You share in our experiences and struggles. Bless all who live with any mental or physical disability. Inspire creative communities, spaces, and environments that are accessible and hospitable. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You have established and nurtured relationships that extend beyond those gathered here today. Bless members who can no longer travel to worship with us (*especially*) and remind us of their continued role in this community of faith. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You promise eternal life to all your children. Thank you for the people of faith who have gone before us. Strengthen our trust we have in you. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Preparing for Next Week

Monday (commemoration of Francis of Assisi, renewer of the church, 1226; Theodor Fliedner, renewer of society, 1864) Psalm 112. **Tuesday** Deuteronomy 24:1-5. **Wednesday** (commemoration of William Tyndale, translator, martyr, 1536) Matthew 5:27-36. **Thursday** (commemoration of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, pastor in North America, 1787) Psalm 90:12-17. **Friday** Deuteronomy 5:22-33. **Saturday** Matthew 15:1-9. **20th Sunday after Pentecost** Amos 5:6-7, 10-15; Psalm 90:12-17; Hebrews 4:12-16; Mark 10:17-31.

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