

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Homily: Fr. Shijo George

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God is not a God of separation but a God of union.

The question of divorce was a major concern to both the first century Jewish and early Christian communities. The heart of the question raised to Jesus was: under what conditions is divorce lawful? Instead of approaching the answer head-on, Jesus shifts the perspective from “What is lawful?” to “What is God’s will for human creation?” This then leads to the real question: What is Marriage and the Family?

The answer is based on a combination of scriptures taken from Genesis Chapter 1, Verse 27 and Chapter 2, Verse 24: that marriage is an expression of God’s will for the union and perfection of man and woman through this union, and that such a union ought not to be broken or torn apart by human beings. In this, Jesus also upholds male-female mutuality in blessing and responsibility.

Sometimes, we may feel and face problems, have bitter feelings, anxiety, and pain in relationships and in family life; but let us be aware that there are no perfect families on earth. It is only through the love of Christ that sustains and makes families happy and healthy all the time. In this, the Catholic Church plays an important role in safeguarding families. As Pope says: “Family is a new mission field for the church.”

Pope Francis challenges families to be witnesses to the world - of love, fidelity and service. In one of his weekly Wednesday homilies, Pope Francis mentioned the importance of the family by emphasizing the primary role of God and of faith in family life; and the crucial importance of regular family prayer to draw on God's grace for strength, love, joy and unity within the home.

He says that the true happiness which we experience within the family is not superficial. It does not come from material objects. True joy comes from the profound harmony experienced between each member within the family: it is something which we feel deep in our hearts.

We know that Jesus, our God, was also born into a family. The fact that God, in Jesus, willed himself to be born into a human family, and to grow up within it, has made the family sacred, and a place where God is present: a prototype of a helping community.

Let us pray through the intercession of St. Joseph, the patron Saint of Families, to enrich our families in true love, and to keep it always in union with Jesus and with each other.

Let us reflect on St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta's thoughts on the family:

***“The family that prays together, stays together,
and if they stay together they will love one another
as God has loved each one of them.
And works of love are always works of peace.”***