

**Homily – Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B
St. Vincent de Paul Parish, 60th Anniversary – October 3, 2021**

The book of Genesis says that God presented the animals to man “to see what he would call them”, highlighting the freedom that makes a person different from God, with his or her own identity. But something remains incomplete because later, none of the other creatures “proved to be a helper suited to the man.” No one helped him be himself.

First God “took out one of his ribs” to build it into a woman. Then the man and the woman unite and form one body. God separates the flesh and then they rejoin. They are no longer one person, but two, forming one body. They were made for each other. It is the experience of many husbands and wives who recognize God’s plan in their marriage, above all human things that occur. They are no longer two, but three, because God united them.

The man exclaims with enthusiasm: “This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.” He experiences the joy of having encountered someone who has brought him to an encounter with himself. She is a helper suitable to him while he is also a helper suitable to her. She helps him be himself as he looks to her to serve her, and vice versa. Living for another gives meaning to a person’s life, making it all worthwhile.

Before, he gave names to beasts and birds. Now, he has a name too, thanks to the fact that he has met someone else. People are someone insofar as we relate to others. The Triune God created mankind in their image, “male and female he created them.” He made them a community of persons. Then the Lord elevated marriage to the category of a sacrament, a tangible sign of his real presence. That is why Pope Francis recently said that “the Church does not have the power to change the sacraments as instituted by the Lord.”

Jesus is very clear: “from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother

and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate.” His words go beyond cultural, political or legal changes that occur due to the hardness of the human heart.

But in addition to that, the beautiful design that God instituted “from the beginning” for marriage and the family is a model for the parish and every society. Like mankind itself, marriage, family and society were also created in the image of God. They find their purpose in dedicating themselves to the good of the other and of all, the common good. God is at the head of marriage and the Church, and he embraces us all, as he does with the children at the end of today’s Gospel reading. No one is excluded!

Our sins, mistakes, wounds, and inclinations are familiar to the Lord because he knows the hardness of our hearts. He sympathizes with our condition, but he is also able to straighten and smoothen our paths. For this reason – as the Letter to the Hebrews says – the Son of God himself “for a little while” was made “lower than the angels,” to suffer death for the benefit of all. “For it was fitting that he, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the leader to their salvation perfect through suffering.” Through the Church, the Lord offers us his Word, who is mercy. And that mercy is at the same time demand, forgiveness and help, so that no one is left out of the family embrace of the Church and Christ, her husband.

The parish community of St. Vincent de Paul has offered that embrace to generations, during these last six decades. Let us strive to extend that embrace even further.

May Our Lady of Guadalupe help us trust in the power of her Son to make all things new.