

**27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**October 7, 2018**

Today's readings remind us that men and women are called to leave their parents, marry, and become one flesh. This image of a married couple as one flesh has captured the imagination and the spiritual convictions of believers from the dawn of creation. In the Old Testament and the New, when a man and a woman come together in marriage they become "one flesh": each becomes a part of the other. Eve is fashioned from the side of Adam to teach this profound mystery in today's First Reading. When a man and a woman come together in a love of total mutual self-giving, it reflects the inter-Personal love within the Most Holy Trinity: when Adam sees Eve for the first time, he recognizes a part of himself, someone without whom he would be incomplete, someone who was missing in his life. For those called to marriage, God has blessed two people with someone out there with whom they can be complete, be whole. The Lord respects their freedom to enter into the marriage covenant with each other, and, for believers, promises to help them with the spiritual graces of the sacrament of matrimony. It is a big step not to be taken lightly, requiring preparation, but when that step is taken, it will be a life-changing blessing for the couple and for everyone they love. Their parents wish them well as they start their new life together and, God-willing, become parents themselves. The beauty of marital love is why marriages in difficulty are so dramatic and tragic: something that is now "one flesh" is trying to pull itself apart. In the difficult moments, it is important to remember not just the emotions of first love, but the fact that God has joined man and woman, and God will help them remain united; they just have to keep striving to seek each other's good. In today's Gospel Our Lord teaches us about marriage in response to some sticky questions posed by the Pharisees about divorce to trip him up. Marriage was a complex issue back then, and it has not grown any easier in today's society. This is one of the few Gospel passages where Our Lord sees the need to correct an interpretation that Mosaic law made; usually, Our Lord exhorts a more profound observance of the Law, not a correction to it. He teaches in today's Gospel that marriage is something established between a man and a woman, but it is also a bond forged by God. As a bond forged by God, the married man and woman also receive spiritual help in remaining faithful to each other. The Pharisees in Jesus' time were debating whether divorce was allowed for either a serious reason or less serious reasons, as two Rabbinical schools at the time were contending, trying to interpret Mosaic law's concession of

divorce in some cases. Jesus responded that neither school was correct: divorce was not part of God's plan "from the beginning."

In the Book of Tobit Sarah had some trouble getting married: seven men who had married her died on their wedding night. A demon was unknowingly to blame, but suspicious eyes turned to Sarah and made her miserable, accusing her of sabotaging her chances for marriage. Tobias meets her and is hesitant about marrying her, understandably so, even Sarah's father wasn't too sure Tobias would make it through the night, he had his servants dig a grave behind the house. But Tobias' traveling companion Azarias (the angel Raphael in disguise) tells him how to drive away the demon. Married and demon-free, Tobias and Sarah spend their wedding night praying before going to sleep for the evening. They prayed that the Lord bless them with old age together since they were marrying not out of lust, but because marriage was part of God's plan for them (cf. Tobit 8:4-9).

Let's pray today for all marriages. Especially for those spouses who are suffering from separation, and that marriages experiencing difficulty may receive the grace, counseling, and insight they need to resolve their differences and be faithful to the bond God has forged between them until death do them part. While yes there are times when divorce is valid and necessary, in today's throwaway society divorce is most of the time the quick and easy fix to a temporary and fixable rough patch. I don't think any longtime married couple would ever say their spouse is perfect, I know Linda wouldn't, but perfection isn't what we need, we only need to strive for what is best for the other person, that is what makes a happy marriage. If you are not married pray for all the married couples you know in your life, if you are married pray the prayer of Tobit and Sarah with your spouse before turning in for the evening (Tobit 8:5-9).