

Men, Women, and God's Creative Plan

On the Sistine Chapel's ceiling, inspired by today's passage from the first reading, Michelangelo painted the amazing moment when God creates woman out of the side of man. He depicts her standing beside the slumbering Adam, almost arguing with God. Perhaps it represents the eternal discussion about the relationship of man and woman. Or perhaps it recalls the perpetual scene of a man asleep on the couch while the woman wonders, "What's wrong with him?" The good thing is that Eve asks the only one who has the answer: God himself.

In fact, Jesus does the same thing in Mark's Gospel. When the Pharisees question him on divorce, Jesus refers them to God's original plan, "But from the beginning of creation..." (10:6). Jesus finds the answer to this challenging question by looking back at God's creative plan for humanity. God has given man and woman to one another as a mutual gift. It is not good that man should be alone, but only God in eternity definitively satisfies the original loneliness found in everyone's heart.

When spousal love breaks down, we would be wise to follow Jesus' advice and refer to God's original plan. Saint John Paul II did that when,

in contemplating married love, he dedicated the first years of his Wednesday audiences to reflect on the first three chapters of Genesis.

Those God has placed alongside us, especially our spouses, are meant to wonderfully (but only partially) satisfy that deep longing to be totally accompanied. Mutual self-giving and self-sacrifice in love is the solution to our inherent isolation and loneliness.

—Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

Reflection

Do I look for others to satisfy a part of me that only God can satisfy?

Do I celebrate all the good things my spouse or loved ones offer me? Do I thank them?



Piece: *The Creation of Eve*, 1508-1512
Artist: Michelangelo
Location: Sistine Chapel ceiling

[Jesus said,] "But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female....So they are no longer two but one flesh."

Mark 10:6, 8

Calendar

Monday

OCTOBER 8

Weekday

Gal 1:6-12

Lk 10:25-37

Tuesday

OCTOBER 9

Weekday

Gal 1:13-24

Lk 10:38-42

Wednesday

OCTOBER 10

Weekday

Gal 2:1-2, 7-14

Lk 11:1-4

Thursday

OCTOBER 11

Weekday

Gal 3:1-5

Lk 11:5-13

Friday

OCTOBER 12

Weekday

Gal 3:7-14

Lk 11:15-26

Saturday

OCTOBER 13

Weekday

Gal 3:22-29

Lk 11:27-28

Sunday

OCTOBER 14

Twenty-eighth Sunday
in Ordinary Time

Wis 7:7-11

Heb 4:12-13

Mk 10:17-30 or

Mk 10:17-27



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Dear Padre,

My fiancée and I were hoping to be married in a park. When we mentioned this to our priest, he informed us that, in this diocese, all Catholic weddings are to take place in a Catholic church. Why is that?

It's true that Catholic weddings always take place in a church, unless the bishop grants specific permission for the ceremony to be performed elsewhere. First, there is a purely practical reason for Catholics to get married in their parish church. It is a way of recording when and where Catholics marry. Parish records serve a useful purpose in both Church and civil matters.

But a more important reason is that marriage, in the eyes of Catholics, is a

sacrament—one of the seven sacred signs through which God communicates love to us. When Catholics marry, they believe God binds their union. The love of the couple for each other is a sign of God's love for both of them. This is expressed during the wedding ceremony with the words: "What God has joined together, let no one put asunder."

The union of the couple is also a continuous sign of Christ's love for the Church. Saint Paul tells us that husbands should love their wives just as Christ loved the Church (Ephesians 5:25). So when Catholics marry, they do not view it simply

as a contract between a man and woman. Rather, they see it as something in which God is deeply involved and which also involves the whole Catholic community.

The church building, which contains the presence of Christ, is thought of as the most sacred place to make this most sacred of commitments.

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A Word From Pope Francis



It is not merely a ceremony in a church, with flowers, a dress, photographs. Christian marriage is a sacrament that takes place in the Church, and which also makes the Church, by giving rise to a new family community....The love between spouses is an image of the love between Christ and his Church.

—General audience, May 6, 2015



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