

27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time  
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Today's readings talk about the fact that the human person needs healthy relationships in order to survive. In the Gospel Jesus commends us to stay faithful to one another. Divorce was a man's prerogative in Jesus time as long as he gave the woman a writ of dismissal so she could remarry. A man could divorce his wife for something as frivolous as ruining a dinner. God is not about broken relationships. God is the repairer of the breach.

The Chinese often will take an expensive vase that has a crack in it and fill the crack with gold to reveal the beautiful character of the vase. God does not want anyone to die a slow death living with abuse or constant infidelity, but wants us in relationships that bring life to one another and new life to others. Then Jesus invites the little children to go to him. Not unlike images we saw of pope Francis welcoming and embracing children.

Why children in a culture of Jesus day when children were not counted, often ignored, and kept quiet and in the background with the women.

Jesus proclaims: "If you do not welcome the Kingdom of God like a child, you will not enter it!" What does it mean to "welcome the Kingdom of God like a child"?

Children play together, welcoming the "other", the stranger. They don't first have to know where they came from; who their God is, and what party they belong to.

Children are flexible, adaptable, and pliable. They change when they are called upon to change.

They are in a constant process of change. They are not rigid, fully formed, and unwelcoming of the new.

Children are ready to learn by listening, being open, curious, and accepting.

Children have a vitality and enthusiasm.

Children have an imagination.

This is respect life Sunday, a day on which we are called to focus on the value of all forms of life.

Our beloved Pope Francis has given us many challenges to respect life more, to begin to walk in the ways of the Kingdom.

Using the Popes words, let us look at some of these challenges.

Welcome all – “The Church is the House of the Father, where there is a place for everyone.” Is there someone in this church you do not know? Let this be a challenge to meet that person(s). We must invite others into our lives.

Never lose perspective. “The pain and shame we feel at the sins of some members of the Church must never make us forget how many Christians are daily giving their lives in love.” It is God we serve and all the brothers and sisters God created. It is not ours to judge.

Include women more – “The presence of women must also be guaranteed in settings where important decisions are made.” We have some growing to do there but we can help it along in modeling with our responses to this challenge.

Live merciful lives – “We need a Church capable of rediscovering the maternal womb of mercy.” Do I live mercy? We must ask ourselves.

We are to help those who are poor – “in the poor and outcast we see Christ’s face.” There will be much more coming out from this parish regarding a new committee to help us be focused about our response to helping those who are poor.

Care for the young and the old – “A society that abandons children and the elderly severs its roots and darkens its future.

Family – “Dear Parents, teach your children to pray and pray with them.” It’s a way to build the family on the foundation of God.

Joy \_ “I cannot imagine a Christian who does not know how to smile.”

As we strive to heed his heartening remark: “The Eucharist is not a prayer for the perfect.”

Today’s Gospel and the Good News in its entirety, is about making a real contribution to the life of the world, about having God’s redemptive power flowing from this Eucharist into our next 6 days.

Wouldn’t we all want a quick fix of our shortcomings? Wouldn’t we all want to love as Jesus? Wouldn’t we all want to take up Pope Francis’s challenges?

It takes hard work and determination.

There is a story about St. Francis. As the story goes: a wolf was viciously terrorizing a village... killing live-stock and even, on occasion, children. The Villagers entreated Francis to help them. Francis entered the woods surrounding the Village, calling out: "Brother wolf, I've come to talk with you." Calling him "brother," Francis immediately entered into relationship with the wolf. "Brother wolf," Francis continued, "You've been doing terrible things! ...but I know why: you are hungry. The Villagers are willing to feed you, but you must stop your attacks." And so it happened: the Villagers and the wolf entered into a relationship of mutual trust and care; and peace was secured.

Our Native sisters and brothers share a similar story:

*An old Cherokee is teaching his grandson about life. "A fight is going on inside me," he said to the boy.*

*"It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil – he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego." He continued, "The other is good – he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you – and inside every other person, too."*

*The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf will win?"*

*The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."*

Kathy Osbelt