

6. October 2024

## Men and women

Gen 2:18-25

*Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper fit for him. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.*

"It is not good that the man should be alone". This statement normally applies to all human life. Animals are not beings in which man finds an equal, although some of them can be faithful companions or a help to man.

But man needs a complement, an equal, someone with who he can love and be loved, someone with whom he can share, dialogue and much more. For this reason, the Lord has given us many manifestations of human love, in which He makes Himself present and which reflect something of divine love.

In particular, God has made love between men and women part of His plan for creation. Today's reading tells us how God created woman from man so that she might be all of him, so that he and she might long for each other and complement each other to the point of becoming one flesh. Just as the man lacks the woman, so the woman lacks the man.

The Genesis account beautifully describes how the man recognised the woman: *"This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man"*.

In this recognition there is already the germ of mutual belonging, of future union, of becoming one flesh. In recognising each other, something new is born. One leaves behind one's former bonds and enters into a new union.

Sacred Scripture presents us here with the state in which man was at the very beginning of human history, just as God had foreseen. Let us remember that at that time man was not yet marked by original sin.

It came later, and as a result of that first sin, in addition to the loss of paradise, the relationship between man and woman was also deeply affected. Although this relationship was disturbed, it remained at the heart of society. Jesus will later remind us of how God originally intended this union: the indissoluble sacramental marriage between a man and a woman, according to our Catholic understanding.

When we look at today's picture, we see great devastation. Not only has the uniqueness of marriage been obscured by infidelity and so-called 'free unions', which have obscured the relationship between man and woman. But now society is going even further by seeking to establish homosexual relationships as 'marriage'.

This is an attack on God's plan of creation!

Sister Lucia, one of the visionaries of Fatima, who had the grace of seeing Our Lady over a hundred years ago, wrote a letter to Cardinal Caffarra shortly before her death. In this letter she warned him that Satan's last great attack would be on the family. If this is true, we can certainly say that we are already suffering this attack, because the family today is extremely threatened, attacked from within and from without.

This is all the more reason to rediscover and live the value of marriage and the family. Even if there are other forms of life that are particularly valuable, such as the vocation to celibacy and thus to universal love, love between a man and a woman is the natural form of life and should be the greatest earthly joy.

To this day we can find couples in which true love between man and woman is experienced, the recognition of each other in such a special way. So the great love between a man and a woman is still a reflection of God's love. Even in these dark and confusing times, it is possible to live authentically in marriage. But you should be able to wait for each other!