

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time
October 8, 2006
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Good Morning! As I said today, the gospel is challenging – all the readings are challenging, when it comes down to it. And today, after the homily, we are going to give our Confirmation candidates the word of God, and the reason that we are going to do that is so that the word of God is that which forms their life – to start them off. That's why, they will have their own bible that they will have for the rest of their lives - that they can use it – and they will – all the days of their life. And so, they can go to God and see what God says about life – not what Oprah says, not what other people say, not what other people's opinions are, but what God says. And so, we begin there and we begin with what God says, and God says, in the very beginning, after saying “this is good, this is good, this is good” – he made every creation – every time He made something, He said “this is good.” But now today is when we get this first “this is not good.” And He says “it is not good that the man should be alone.” So, the first thing we have to acknowledge today is that it is the will of God that we are not alone. Some people, including me, love to be that Lone Ranger and try to do it ourselves. But God says that is not good – that is not what I want. Again, Jesus went against that when He sent the disciples out, how? Two by Two! So, it is not good for celibates, it's not good for singles, it is not good for anybody to be alone. So first we have to go there – this is what God says – “it is not good.” But then what we do after that is that God fixes the problem. He brings to man all of the animals. So, it is God that starts fixing it. So, after God says that something is not good, He says, “ok, I have to fix this.” And so He brings to man all of the animals, and none of those work, and so He says, “ok, now I know,” and He puts him into a deep sleep and out of him, from his very being He creates a new person – woman. And he says “at last this is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh. This one will be called woman.” So, it is God Himself, from the decree of God in the beginning who makes us fit together, because it comes from the same being. And so, what God is calling us to is that community, that unity. And so, when we get there, it is two people for life – that when two people get married, they get married and become one flesh. Now, as is today, so was it back then when Jesus was around. They are walking and talking about divorce. Now, Jesus, of course, doesn't go around the subject – He deals with it right up front. And so often, as I go around and people say “oh, Father when is the Church going to get up with the times – when are you going to change this whole thing of divorce and re-marriage? Come on, Father, the Church has to get up with the times, or it is going to lose everybody.” And when do you think the Church is going to do that? Never! Because to do that would be to spit in God's face! It would be going against the founder of the Church! “Jesus, you know, you are kind of old fashioned. This staying together for life is just not possible! Jesus, we have needs, and those needs have to be fulfilled!” And God says “nope, you are to fulfill the needs of the other.” That is how it is called to be. That what it is going to take is suffering! Suffering! You know, in that beautiful second reading, Jesus said He might taste death for who? For us! He tasted death for us! He is not ashamed to call us brothers! That God left heaven, if you will, and tasted death for us! And He suffered for us. And anyone who has been married knows that it entails suffering

because you have to go against your own will! Isn't that hard? Yes, of course it's hard! And it's not just for married people! It's for priests! I have to go against my will! You know, I am watched by every person, every moment, of every day! It goes against my will! And I have to sit there and know that I am not here by myself, you are not here by yourself! You know, we have to do a little teaching first, before I get into the rest of the homily. The teaching on marriage – by definition, is between a man and a woman – period. Second – the man and the woman come together, they take vows before God until death do us part. Sorry if you don't like that – that is what people say! You take each other until death. Now to be married officially in the Church, you must get married in front of a priest, or, with the permission of the Church. So, if you are catholic, and you get married by a JP or a minister, you are not married. You must get married in the Catholic Church to be married. Or, if you are marrying someone who is not Catholic, you can get permission to get married in their church, but you need to get a dispensation from the Church. So, marriage is between a man and a woman, and it is for life. And it has to be done by the rules of the Church. Now, we all realize – let's say someone gets divorced – is that person excommunicated? No. They are against the will of God, because God hates divorce the word of God says. But sin is sin, and you need to repent of it. So, a person who gets divorced is not excommunicated from the Church. Are they able to receive Communion? Yes. No different than anybody else. And you know, sometimes in dealing with people they will say "Father, I was excommunicated." "Why?" "Well, I got divorced!" "You were not excommunicated!" "Well, someone told me I was!" "Well, they were wrong!" You are not excommunicated just because you get divorced! Now, the problem is, if you get divorced and remarried without permission from the Church – which means the annulment process – you see, what happens is when two people come together and they say before God "I will stay with you until death do us part." That's what you say. Now, my mother has been married three times, we are fully aware that life is not as black and white as we want it to be – that people are human beings. So, what happens though, is you have to come back to the community though, and the community will try to fix it – just like God does. "It is not good for the man to be alone..." so lets try to fix this. So, the Church doesn't expel people, it says you have to come back to the community and we are going to deal with this – we are going to help you. And the problem is some people say "I don't need help, I can do it myself!" That's called sin - that we find salvation in the community of the church. And so, God says it is not good to be alone. We need to come together. We need to let the word of God influence our life – control our life – shape our life, and then when we fall and we do things, we need the community of the church to come together and say "now help me." So, that's the second thing – that's the little marriage thing – you know, I have to teach because people come and say "oh, what do I do..." So, if you listen, God brings all of these people to the man for him not to be alone. So, what does this mean for us? It means that when God brings people into our life, that we accept them. We don't have to be super nice to every body, but we have to accept them. And so, sometimes someone will come in – and let's say we're going to be putting this new web site together, and right on the web site, the first thing you are going to see is that everyone is welcome into the community of this church. Doesn't matter your sexual orientation, it doesn't matter on your marital status – we accept everybody – that is what it is going to say – because that is the teaching of the Church. But then, we will not leave you where we find you. We will take you deeper to

the call of holiness. So, everybody is welcome, but just because they are welcome doesn't mean that we ok everything a person does. It means that sometimes we are going to have to sit there and say, "ok, you are going to have to repent now and you are going to have to do what God wants you to do. "Well, I don't think I like that." Well, we want you to go to heaven. It's not good to be alone – come into the community and we will help you. It won't be easy, but we will help you. And so what we need to do – when God brings us people we need to meet them where they are at – but not keep them there. We accept them where they are, but we don't leave them there. And so, sometimes God will bring people into your life that you don't want to be there – hee, hee! Trust me on that one! And our job is to treat them the way God commands us to treat them. Second – then what did God do? He left heaven. It's a wonderful thing, because when you go back to that Old Testament, God sat there and said "it is not good for man to be alone..." but they weren't really alone, because God was with them. But then He became one of us to be with us. We need to be people that invite others into this community. Especially as we spend time in this month of October – that we are inviting people to know God. There are so many people that live lives of quiet desperation because they are lonely. You know people who are lonely – you know people that are alone. What can you do? You can reach out to them and bring them home. God let you know them so that you can go out of your way – reach out and bring them home. So please, its God's will that we are not alone. It is God's will that marriage is a life-time commitment – that when things don't work you come back to the community and let the community help you. It is God's will that we accept the people He brings into our life – that we meet them where they are, but don't leave them where they are. And it is God's will that we invite people into this relationship. That people who are living quiet lives of desperation and loneliness, we invite them to come to the true life of Christ – the community of the church. You got it? Get it? Gonna do it? May each of you know His love today and forever. Amen.