



Bringing Home the Word



Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, October 4, 2015

Two-In-One

By Janel Esker

In the comic strip *Zits*, “one” of the recurring characters is a couple named RichardAmy (no spaces). They’re high-school sweethearts drawn in a permanent embrace. They’ve spent so much time physically entwined that their friends see them as one person with a single name.

You may know a couple similar to RichardAmy, and the media often refer to celebrity couples this way: “Brangelina” and “Bennifer,” to name two.

Is this what Jesus meant by “the two shall become one flesh?” I grappled with this question when preparing for my own marriage. How do two separate,

unique people “become one flesh?”

The Church offers the Trinity as a model. The spouses *not only* become a new, united creation *but also* retain their individuality. My husband and I didn’t become “JanelandRon” on our wedding day—we became a new “Janel and Ron,” bound and united in Christ. We each maintain friendships, hobbies, and interests—some shared, some separate—since neither of us can completely fulfill each other’s needs.

In other words, it’s not an either/or experience. This is why I cringe when couples light the unity candle at their wedding and then extinguish the two individual candles. All three candles should remain lit to represent two persons—still unique creations—whom God has joined in marriage. (A *Dear Padre* in August addressed this very issue; see Liguori.org/marriage.)

In today’s Gospel, Jesus upholds the divine nature of the sacrament of marriage. He isn’t just a guest at the wedding—he’s the very bond of love between the spouses. When a couple marries, God is present in a special way. In him they are, at the same time, two persons and one body. †

A Word from Pope Francis

Laudato si’, 11

Saint Francis of Assisi helps us to see that an integral ecology calls for openness to categories which transcend the language of mathematics and biology, and take us to the heart of what it is to be human. Just as happens when we fall in love with someone, whenever he would gaze at the sun, the moon or the smallest of animals, he burst into song, drawing all other creatures into his praise...His response to the world around him was so much more than intellectual appreciation or economic calculus, for to him each and every creature was a sister united to him by bonds of affection...



For Christians, believing in one God who is trinitarian communion suggests that the Trinity has left its mark on all creation....The world...is a web of relationships. Creatures tend towards God, and in turn it is proper to every living being to tend towards other things....This leads us not only to marvel at the manifold connections existing among creatures, but also to discover a key to our own fulfillment. The human person grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all.

Sunday Readings

Genesis 2:18–24

“This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.”

Hebrews 2:9–11

“It was fitting that he...should make the leader to their salvation perfect through suffering.”

Mark 10:2–16

“Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate.”

Bioethics: Animal Experimentation

By Fr. Mark Miller, CSSR

The use of animals in medical research is a controversial but necessary part of finding new treatments and cures for various human diseases and ailments. Rats, dogs, farm animals, and primates may be used to establish the safety and effectiveness of experimental drugs or treatment options.

Animal-rights activists have been vocal in seeking protection for animals against unethical treatment in research. As with many laws addressing human subjects, safeguards, and protections for animals often arise only after abuses. However, some go so far as to argue that animals should have the same rights as humans and therefore should not be harmed, killed, or eaten at all. This is not in accordance with Catholic teaching, so caution is needed.

This raises the question, “What do we mean by ‘unethical treatment?’” Catholic ethics, which allows the use of animals for research, demands proper respect and appropriate care for these animals. First, animals are not to be subjected to unnecessary pain and suffering. This means that drugs or treatments that may be painful or harmful need to be counteracted by proper care. If surgery is done, proper anesthesia must be administered. If a new drug demonstrates a severe side effect, the animal is not to be left suffering. One researcher told me that all experimental animals need to be regarded like farm



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- What parts of me are lonely or suffering? What parts are childlike or innocent?
- In what ways has God brought me to greater wholeness?

dogs (valued worker and pet) that are housed and cared for appropriately.

Second, the arbitrary misuse of animals must be totally prohibited. Any research needs to have clear protections for the subjects and clear goals that are beneficial for the greater good and that outweigh the potential side effects or negative results.

Third, most universities and some private research facilities have an advocate and/or an ethics committee to achieve the following goals: (1) overseeing the proper care of animals for research, with strict criteria in place about the environment, feeding, and use of the animals, and (2) examining any borderline cases that may misuse animals. Such advocates are empowered to suspend any researcher who does not uphold the published standards of protection. Ideally, researchers would be “naturally” ethical in such treatment, but in fact, without an enforcement mechanism, it is astonishing to see what some human beings inflict on animals (and other humans).

In short, research animals deserve strong defenders. Those who benefit from knowledge gained through their use must be aware of the rules and protest if companies do not have and enforce an ethical code of conduct. Anything less is an offense against these creatures whom God has given to our oversight. And all mistreatment of research subjects becomes a sign of moral failure—first of individuals, then of the society.

PRAYER

Lord, I am grateful for your gifts of marriage and family. Help me to become more aware of and responsive to their needs for support and advocacy.

—From *Grateful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*,
Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

October 5–10

Mon. Weekday: *Jonah 1:1—2:2, 11 / Luke 10:25–37*

Tue. Weekday: *Jonah 3:1–10 / Luke 10:38–42*

Wed. *Our Lady of the Rosary: Jonah 4:1–11 / Luke 11:1–4*

Thu. Weekday: *Malachi 3:13–20 / Luke 11:5–13*

Fri. Weekday: *Joel 1:13–15; 2:1–2 / Luke 11:15–26*

Sat. Weekday: *Joel 4:12–21 / Luke 11:27–28*