

27th Sunday (B)

7th October 2018

‘Rosary, Marriage, Family’

Gen 2: they become one body Ps 127: your wife like a fruitful vine; your
children like shoots of the olive Heb 2: *sanctifier and sanctified are brothers*
Mk 10: 2–16: *what God has united, man must not divide*

We began Mass peacefully today with a simple decade of the Holy Rosary. It’s the month of October, and in May & October — months with a special Marian feel — we take this opportunity to invoke together, as a parish, the powerful intercession of the greatest of all the saints in heaven, Our Blessed Lady, Mother of Christ / Mother of the Church. That opening decade of all the mysteries of the rosary sets the scene for all the rest which follow: the ‘Annunciation’ shows us Mary accepting the will of God in her life, saying ‘yes’ to God’s plan for her; saying ‘yes’ to both virginity and motherhood; saying ‘yes’ to faithfulness in the troubles of life ahead. As soon as we enter into the rosary, then, we are asking Our Lady to help us do as she did: to accept God’s will in our lives, to imitate her holiness in all things, and in particular her faithfulness to the vocation that God called her to.

Let’s not be under any illusions that Our Lady’s life

was anything other than a challenge. As we pray the mysteries of the Rosary, beginning from this episode of the Annunciation, we discover her life completely entwined with the sufferings of Jesus her Son. The 2nd reading today laid out some of those sufferings of Jesus, as He submitted Himself to His Passion and Death. Mary shared in those, from the start, even as she had to endure the journey to Bethlehem, and fleeing from the murderous King Herod. At no point could we ever say, then, that Our Lady does not understand the rigours of a human life. She does — and she is the perfect intercessor for us, therefore, who live from day to day the joys and sorrows of human life.

We read in the Gospel, today, of Jesus’s teachings on marriage and family life. He upholds the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman; He teaches that it is to be a lifelong union; and He teaches that children are to be welcomed, nurtured, and brought to Him ... “for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs,” He says. Now, each of us has grown up in a family: whether or not we have gone on to have a spouse and children of our own,

yet we know the strengths and the struggles of the relationships that make up a family. No family is perfect — we have all struggled at times in our families; no marriage is perfect — it has its ups and downs; no children are perfect — they give us big worries sometimes. And yet, the family is the bedrock of society: the loving relationship of husband and wife, mirroring the love God has for us; the joy of bringing children into the world to give continuity to society and the Church; the mission of the family to be the school for learning to grow in love, selflessness and forgiveness.

How much we each need to have prayer for our families! Invoking Our Lady's prayers in the Rosary for our families is perhaps the ideal prayer. Our Lady was crucial to the Holy Family with Jesus and Joseph. She it was who, by her openness to God, meant that the Holy Family existed at all. So let's ask her intercession in this month of October to pray for our families. Let's use our rosaries daily — or just count on our ten fingers at convenient breaks in the day — to offer up a tidal wave of prayer to heaven for our families. Let's pray for those we know of who struggle in

their marriages; let's pray for those we know of with worries about their children; let's pray for those we know of who have families with longstanding disputes and divisions that need healing ... Let's ask Our Blessed Lady, and St Joseph her faithful spouse, for their concerted efforts in union with our own prayers, to bring about peace and reconciliation, renewed love and affection, tolerance and understanding, patience and forgiveness ... The parish is a family of families ... we gather together each Sunday to strengthen one another and pray for one another, and to bring to the altar of Jesus's sacrifice all the needs we have. Let's make sure that this praying family of our parish reaches out fervently in prayer to the members of our family in special need of consolation and reconciliation. Let's never forget that Our Blessed Mother wants all her children to be at peace with one another, and united wholly in faith in the Church. Let's call to mind those — particularly of our families — who are most in need of prayer at this time *Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*