

Joint Diaconate and Session Meeting
April 26, 2015

Opening Unison Prayer:

Everlasting God, in whom we live and move and have our being: You have made us for yourself, so that our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you. Give us purity of heart and strength of purpose, that no selfish passion may hinder us from knowing your will, no weakness keep us from doing it; that in your light we may see clearly, and in your service find perfect freedom.

We pray for your holy catholic church. Fill it with all truth in all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where in any thing it is amiss, reform it. Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for we offer our prayer in the strong name of Jesus Christ your Son and our Savior. Amen.

Scripture Reading:

Genesis 2:18-25

Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.'¹⁹ So out of the ground the Lord God formed every animal 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 each living creature, that was its name.²⁰ The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man* there was not found a helper as his partner.

²¹So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.

²²And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.²³ Then the man said,

'This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
this one shall be called Woman,*
for out of Man* this one was taken.'

²⁴Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh.²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

Break up into small groups of 4 (2 elders and 2 deacons)

In your small group:

- 1. In the beginning of the creation stories, we see God ordering life and human relationships. Why does God find it necessary for man to have a “suitable helper”?**
- 2. This is the first instance in which the word, “wife” is used in scripture. What is a wife/and or husband? What does this language suggest?**
- 3. What does it mean for the two to become “one flesh”? Think for a moment about the relationship within the Godhead – Father, Son, and Spirit. How does the “marriage” relationship reflect the relationship of the Trinity?**
- 4. Read Mark 10:1-9 below. What does it mean to you that Jesus quotes the words from Genesis as a way to describe marriage? Why does Jesus say, “what God has joined together, let no one separate”?**

Mark 10:1-9

Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them.

2 Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”

3 “What did Moses command you?” he replied.

4 They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.”

5 “It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law,” Jesus replied. **6** “But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’[a] **7** ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,[b] **8** and the two will become one flesh.’[c] So they are no longer two, but one flesh. **9** Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

5. **Close your group time in prayer, thanking God for the gift of marriage and that our marriages in this church might give glory to God and reflect God's love and union with us.**