

TWENTY-SEVENTH OT - B

The first Sunday of October is always set aside as Respect Life Sunday and the beginning of Respect Life Month.

The readings we are given for the Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time speak well to the theme of respect for all life.

In the first reading we hear about God's care for the man he has created: "It is not good for the man to be alone."

God's creation of the animals and the role of the man in naming them represents the original harmony intended by God between human beings and creation.

This basic harmony is fully realized in the creation of the woman from the rib taken from the man.

Adam recognizes in Eve his partner, his helpmate, his equal with whom he is called to live as one flesh.

Our respect for the life of the unborn must begin with the fundamental belief that all life is sacred and is a gift from God.

Men and women together are co-creators with God and have been given the responsibility for the care of creation.

Unfortunately we all know that the harmony intended by God from the beginning fell prey to the disruption caused by sin.

Jesus identifies the root of sin as "hardness of heart," the refusal to live up to our original vocation as having been created in the image of God.

When we fail to honor the dignity of women as equals to men, when we look upon creation as our property to plunder and abuse, when we devalue children and see them as a burden rather than a blessing ...

All of these attitudes and behaviors lead to a culture of death which increasingly distances us from the Gospel of Life.

Instead of a society which treasures the least among us as precious in the eyes of God there is the ever-increasing tendency to adopt a "throw away" mentality where my personal convenience and comfort become the measuring stick of something or someone's value.

The Letter to the Hebrews contrasts this way of thinking to that of Christ who willingly shared our human nature, embraced the reality of suffering, and tasted death so that we might have eternal life.

Whenever we speak about "respect for life" we have to acknowledge this pattern of the Paschal Mystery.

There is a real cost to protecting all life as precious, and we cannot pick and choose between which lives are more precious than others.

As Jesus welcomes the children, the little ones, into the embrace of his Kingdom so we are called to welcome and protect the little and least among us.

Jesus also challenges us to accept the Kingdom of God like a child.

During this first week of October we celebrate the memory of St. Therese of Lisieux of the Child Jesus.

St. Therese sought to do all of the little ordinary things of life with child-like joy and love.

We also honor the Guardian Angels, patrons of the Diocese of Gary.

Each of us, as children of God, has been given a heavenly protector to lead and guide us.

And on Monday we remember St. Francis of Assisi.

His joyful imitation of Jesus, especially in his poverty and his embracing of all creatures as his brothers and sisters, continues to be an inspiration to all Christians.

May the saints and angels pray for us as we continue to strive to live as faithful disciples of Lord committed to the respect and protection of all life.