

27th Sunday Ordinary Time 2024

'You are a royal priesthood, a holy nation a people set apart'

The story goes that an archaeologist was excavating the Pyramids when she came across some interesting hieroglyphics. When the translation was made of these ancient monuments it read, 'Blooming kids, who'd have them!' So, challenges in family life are nothing new, reflected in a Reading last week from Ecclesiastes which stated, '...there is nothing new under the sun'. Yet, for all the challenges of family life, most of us would not be without our families.

The second Creation Story in Genesis 2 today reinforces the beauty and importance of family and emphasise how a man and woman in marriage become one. Indeed, it might also be arguably suggesting that through that union children become part of that oneness. We hear often the phrase, 'the family unit', suggesting the oneness and unity of family members. No-one has children and thinks, 'I'll love them as long as they turn out the way I want them to be.' We love our children unconditionally and this is a sign of God's unconditional love for us. Marriage itself is a sacrament, a sign in the world, of God's faithful, life-giving and everlasting love for His People.

In today's Second Reading from Hebrews, we hear that we are also part of a bigger family, The Christian Family. We are indeed part of a priestly, kingly and prophetic family by virtue of our Baptism and Confirmation, when we are anointed with Chrism. In The Old Testament priests, kings and prophets were anointed so, in The Royal Christian Family each of us are priests/priestesses, princesses/princes and prophets/prophetesses. What great dignity has been bestowed on us by God.

In today's Gospel Jesus endorses the great dignity and majesty of family, 'People were bringing little children to him, for him to touch them. The disciples turned them away, but when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to, such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' Then he put his arms round them, laid his hands on them and gave them his blessing.' Notice how Jesus 'lays his hands on the children and blesses them! This is exactly the same sign the Bishop bestows on us, the 'epiclesis' or invoking of The Holy Spirit, at Confirmation!

All of us should walk out of The Eucharistic Celebration buoyed by today's Liturgy of The Word knowing that, despite the challenges of family life, we are true royalty of a priestly and prophetic line, sisters and brothers in Christ. What a blessing family is and what a gift our Christian family is!!!