

Sunday Message from Fr William for Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time 2024

*The 'Other World' continued from 02.06.24*

So, why were we created male and female? It should be clear, at least from the teaching of the Christian Bible relayed in these reflections, and especially from the words of Jesus, that we were created male and female *not* so that we could get married and have children. This is just one particular and especially beautiful way of living the maleness and femaleness with which we have been created.

No, we were created male and female so that we would carry in our bodies, now and into eternity, in this world and in the 'other world', the image and likeness of our Creator. 'God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.' (*Genesis 1:27*). We were created male and female so that the 'spousal meaning' inscribed in our bodies by the Creator as his personal signature, as the expression of his own self-giving nature, would be inscribed in our bodies for ever. (See Sunday Message 28 April 2024)

Moreover the vocation to marriage, this one particular and especially beautiful way of living our maleness and femaleness, does not carry through to the 'other world', but is for this world only. This is clear and unambiguous in the teachings of Christ, and preserved in all three synoptic gospels. 'The children of this world take wives and husbands, but those judged worthy of a place in the world and in the resurrection from the dead do not marry.' (*Luke 20:34, cf Mark 12:25 and Matthew 22:30*)

Human sexuality on the other hand, the maleness and femaleness of our bodies, emphatically does carry through to the 'other world' in the resurrection of the body to eternal life. Nor does our maleness/femaleness become in any sense redundant like, for example, the human appendix or coccyx. These vestigial organs, though part of the body, though part indeed of the risen body, make minimal or zero contribution either to our personal identity or to our lives. By contrast, the maleness and femaleness of the human body, indeed of the risen body, is fundamental to who we are as human beings created in the image and likeness of the Creator. It is like an inbuilt compass directing us to self-giving love, potentially in this world as we increasingly learn to read it and live by it, and continuously in the 'other world'.

In the 'other world' the union of marriage, this mutual and total self-giving between husband and wife, is subsumed and superseded by another union, the union between Christ and the individual, the mutual and total self-giving between Christ and the individual. The continuity of our maleness/femaleness into the 'other world', indeed human maleness and femaleness in its final maturity in the 'other world', is essential to what Karol Wojtyła calls the 'eschatological authenticity' of this union. (*ToB 68 - 16.12.81*). In other words, the union between Christ and ourselves in the 'other world' will only be fully authentic if it fully engages our maleness and femaleness, not of course in any kind of sexual intimacy that is for this world only, but in a mutual self-giving love proper to the union between Creator and human creature when our maleness and femaleness have attained their eschatological maturity.

*to be continued...*

*William*

9<sup>th</sup> June 2024