



# FIRST SUNDAY OF OCTOBER

**DATE:** October 7, 2018 (27<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time)

**THEME:** Right Relationships

**READINGS:** Gen 2:18-24 / Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6 / Heb 2:9-11 /  
Mk 10:2-16

**REFLECTION BY:** Daniel L. Damonsong

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## Right Relationships

**Daniel L. Damonsong**

Brothers and sisters in Christ. We have to see what is our situation in our world today. Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* expressed that “the joy of living frequently fades, lack of respect for others and violence are on the rise, and inequality is increasingly evident. It is a struggle to live and, often, to live with precious little dignity.” The world influences us through the advancement of knowledge, science, technology, and also the media. However, these realities become a culture of modernization wherein individualism, commercialism, materialism and relativism pervade our lives. How do we overcome these influences and how do we proclaim Jesus amidst these strong forces?

These creeping “modern” cultures impact our lives and will be overcome through right relationships characterized by unity in order to effect change. Martin Buber shared with us how to go about building a fulfilling, meaningful society (true community) by making proper use of the neglected second mode of engaging the world and by using this mode to relate to God. He discussed the “I-it” and the “I-thou” relationship.

**Relationships.** First, the “I-it” or the experience is what modern man exclusively uses. In experience, according to Buber, man collects data, analyzes it, classifies it and theorizes about it. The “I” is the subject and





the “it” is the object. In a relationship, man treats woman and everyone as human, not as an object. If man looks at a fellow human being as an object, then he/she is useful or useless. If the man does not benefit from him, then that person is useless. He/she can be replaced by another individual who contributes or gives benefits to him/her.

The second is the “I-Thou” relationship. “I” is the individual and “Thou” is God. As individuals we are open to building a society based on the relation to “Thou” who is God, rather than the experience of “it.” In every human encounter that we have, we feel that there could be something more, something more lasting and more fulfilling. This “more” is an encounter with God. How do we deepen our encounter with God?

First is with prayer. Personal prayer helps deepen our communication with God and it can be expressed communally. Second, reading the scriptures helps us understand Christ better. Reading the scriptures gives us an encounter with Christ as a person and as a divine being. Third, attending the Holy Eucharist is another way of strengthening our relationship with God. To thank the Lord for the blessings that one receives is a way of expressing our right relationship with God; this can be shared with others. It is our obligation to attend the Eucharist every Sunday. Fourth is the sacrament of reconciliation where we ask forgiveness for the sins that we have committed. Fifth, once we do these, enduring and loving services are manifestations of our right relationship with God.

**Commandments.** The two greatest commandments state: Love God and love your neighbor as you love yourself. It is a joy to share Christ with everyone so that social transformation will be obtained and experienced. Thus, there is a change from individualism to a sense of community; from materialism to a sense of generosity; from commercialism to a sense of meaning and value; and, from relativism to a moral sense of right behavior.

In the Gospel of Mark, there are two important things discussed in a right relationship. First, a right relationship leads to commitment



and valuing others, just like in the sacrament of marriage. Christ must be the center of the relationship so that there would be no problems such as adultery and divorce which are products of the culture of modernization. In order to have a strong relationship with one another and with God, the couple must nourish their spiritual life. Marriage becomes our model for our future in His Kingdom. We are called to form ourselves throughout our lives, to live as His children through our families, including married life.

Secondly, right relationships require humility. Just like in the Gospel, Jesus welcomes the little children into the kingdom. If we have this value in life, people learn to accept their mistakes and contribute to social transformation. Thus, one defeats the culture of modernization.

Our challenge, brothers and sisters, is to have right relationships that require a faithful communication with God that is expressed with others. Let us not close our hearts, let us not lose confidence, and let us never give up (as Pope Francis notes). All of us are called to live and share the love of God.



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*“We would also like you to know that the Church recognizes the riches of the Islamic faith — a faith that binds us to the one God.”*

**Paul VI**

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