

27 Sunday (B)

Homily

6/7 October

This is the Sunday we welcome at the 9.30 Mass all the new children who are now coming to our school and their parents. But that begs the question, doesn't it? Is the church **really** welcoming? Are there some people who, rightly or wrongly feel that the Church is shutting them out?

The man who divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another she is guilty of adultery too. Pretty uncompromising stuff.

The marriage discipline in the Roman Catholic Church is based on this verse. That teaching, in a nutshell, is this, that once you have entered onto a **valid** marriage, and as long as your partner is still alive, you cannot enter into a relationship with anyone else.

How does that make you feel? It makes me feel personally very uncomfortable.

The Church of Jesus, the disciples who gathered around Jesus, turned people away as well 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.'*

Who are these 'little children'? Surely everyone whose relationships and marriage are less than perfect, everyone who has experienced brokenness and failure. Instead, Jesus goes on to say '*anyone who does not welcome the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.'*

It is precisely those who know they have messed up who are most welcome to Jesus. Or as Jesus says in another place '*It is not the healthy who need the doctor but the sick.'*

The Church may not always seem all that welcoming. But Jesus who is at the heart of the Church is always welcoming. May all of you feel Jesus around you today, may he lay his hands upon you and your families and give you his blessing, and most of all allow him to feed you with His Body and Blood.

Fr Michael