

Column100222

Companions on the Journey

October 02, 2022

Dear Friends in Christ,

Today is Respect Life Sunday. And typically, the life issues around the most defenseless are addressed. Today I would like to focus our attention on something that is being overlooked a great deal today. It has to do with the way we are made. Our faith tells us that God has created each one of us and breathed a soul into us in the moment of conception. In addition to what our faith tells us, science tells us things too. In the moment of conception my own unique DNA was formed and will be replicated in me all throughout my life. It will not change. It has been set. And those who study my DNA will be able to discern many things about me and determine many things about me. One of the most profound is that of my sexual identity.

Genetically, I am a male. Genetically there are females of the species as well. The male is able to reproduce by producing sperm cells in his body (without knowing the when or the how of doing this) by means of the male reproductive system, the production of sperm cells in the male will have just 23 chromosomes. These special cells are capable of joining egg cells which are produced in the body of the female. During each reproductive cycle a woman's body selects (without her knowing how or when she is doing this) an egg for ripening and eventually conveys that fertilizable egg into her Fallopian Tube. If there is sperm present, then the possibility of conception is very real.

Science again tells us the woman's egg also has only 23 chromosomes. Every other kind of cell in either body has a full complement of 46 chromosomes. But the sperm cell and egg cell are made in such a way that they can be joined by the opposite sex reproductive cell and join together to form a new, genetically unique human being. Each reproductive cell will contribute 23 chromosomes to the newly conceived human being, all of whose cells will now have 46 chromosomes. All, except the sperm or egg cell in this newly conceived human being.

It is at this point that our faith can reenter the picture. Why is that necessary? Because the world of creation has undergone a trauma. There has been damage done to this world and all within it. Every living thing has been damaged by the introduction of sin into the picture, the selfish misuse of all that has been created. Saint Paul says: "All creation groans and is in agony, awaiting the day of redemption of Our Lord Jesus Christ." All creation groans. All creation is in agony. There is a malfunctioning that has occurred in the beauty of the original design of the Creator. It has affected everything from the star cluster in the deepest parts of outer space to the intricate ways we interact with each other as human beings, to the human mind's understanding of what is going on. In addition, we believe that our God is not content to leave this damage to just continue and wreak havoc among people's lives on this planet. He has sent One to help us, assist us, teach us, to clarify for us, to heal us and restore us.

Why is the reference to Jesus pertinent? Because there are some in our culture who are confused about authenticity about who is a man and who is a woman. And what this means. This confusion has spilled over in our culture and infected a number of our young people. Some feel as if they are trapped in the wrong body. Some believe they have to take drastic steps to remedy this conviction. On some occasions parents and educators and physicians have taken the path of affirming the beliefs of the young rather than countering them with a greater and deeper truth, with the truth that their confusion can be remedied and the proper equilibrium and understanding of sexuality can be restored.

The choice to ignore what the Creator and Redeemer have done, and the choice to ratify where the young person is, have often produced tragic consequences. Over in the United Kingdom which went down this path years before we did here, there is a backlash brewing where a number of the young who underwent surgery and drastic hormonal treatments are now suing for damages the very doctors who did the surgery and the doctors who prescribed the intense hormonal treatments on the grounds of child abuse. The young people in their twenties and older are now very clear on what they see has happened to them. They believe the elders should have known better and not simply affirmed or encouraged the adolescent confusion about sexual identity.

Respect Life means that we respect life as God made it. Not as it has been damaged and confused and misunderstood. We who believe in Christ believe that he has the way for us to move through this ordeal. That He IS the Way to move through this ordeal. This really is a time for renewed prayer for those who are so afflicted and for our society which has begun to lose its sense of itself and its moral compass. Giving in to what adolescents want for themselves has never been a mature approach. This is the time to ask the Holy Spirit for the gift of fortitude. Courage. This Respect Life Sunday let's pray for Courage.

Peace,

Msgr. McHenry