

Gospel

Mark 10: 6–9

They are no longer two, but one body.

✠ A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

Jesus said,

6 'From the beginning of creation God made them male and female.

7 This is why a man must leave father and mother,

8 and the two become one body.

They are no longer two, therefore, but one body.

9 So then, what God has united, man must not divide.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Looking at the Text

M G-6 Mark 10:6-9

They are no longer two, but one body.

The Gospel of St Mark

St Mark's is the shortest of the four Gospels, presenting the life and ministry of Jesus. It was probably written during a time of persecution of early Christians. St. Mark speaks of the cost of following Christ Jesus, for example, 'If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.' A 'cross' in our marriages might be seen as the ways in which we say 'no' to ourselves in order to say 'yes' to the one we love — it's a good and positive way of experiencing the joy of a life well-lived. Paradoxically, we are happier when we are loving and serving and giving, than when we are fearful and selfish.

Background for this passage

From the account of Creation of human beings, we hear that God made them male and female, in God's own image, and God blessed them and asked them to be fruitful. This is an amazing mystery — that a man and a woman united together in love and marriage says something about God who is love, and God's fruitfulness in creation! There are 'laws' for marriage in the Church, alongside the blessings. These are given to encourage 'stickability', and help us to sustain life-long, fruitful marriages. Here, Jesus is teaching about the commitment of marriage. A man and a woman are joined together and God pours out his love and blessings, giving strength to combat any human weakness, enabling the couple to live a faithful and joyful life together. In a culture that is sadly lacking in commitment, a couple choosing to get married in church are a great sign of hope and encouragement for everyone. The true happiness born in strong relationships shines out for all. In a life-long commitment, both partners can flourish. Through the exchange of consent and making vows, they are assured in the knowledge that they are loved, and that God has united them, come what may. Each can be honest, and vulnerable, trusting in their husband or wife's acceptance of them. In this environment of self-less love, mixed in with faith in God's love and support with them, the couple can live out their vocation, and grow towards being the happy, blessed, fruitful people God made them to be. That sounds idealistic! A marriage is not an easy path, and requires great tenacity and trust too. However, bottom line, it is designed by God to be a way of life that images something of what heaven is, and it is powerful in the living of it.

Questions for further reflection

You might like to talk together about what it has meant for you to leave your 'family of origin', and to begin the process of making your own home as a new 'family unit' together. What does the word 'commitment' mean to you, and 'life-long' commitment? What does it mean for a relationship to be fruitful?

- Think of a marriage you admire. What do you think has made it a 'good' marriage over the years? What are the human qualities that 'join' you both together in your relationship?
- Take time to talk about the promises you are going to make to one another, and your hopes for your life as a 'family unit'.
 - Have you come without any pressure from anyone, freely and wholeheartedly to enter into marriage?

- Are you prepared to love and honour each other as long as you both shall live? Are you prepared to accept children lovingly from God and to bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?
- ‘I take you to be my wife/husband.
to have and to hold from this day forward,
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish
till death do us part.’
- ‘Receive this ring as a sign of my love and fidelity.’
- What do you like about this reading? Why might it be a good choice for your wedding?

Note about the Reading

M = this indicates that this is a reading which speaks explicitly about Marriage. One of the chosen readings must be taken from those which are about Marriage.