

Reading

Romans 12: 1–2. 9–18

Offer your living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God.

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans.

- 1 Think of God's mercy, my brothers, and worship him,
I beg you, in a way that is worthy of thinking beings,
by offering your living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God.
- 2 Do not model yourselves on the behaviour of the world around you,
but let your behaviour change, modelled by your new mind.
This is the only way to discover the will of God
and know what is good, what it is that God wants,
what is the perfect thing to do.
- 9 Do not let your love be a pretence, but sincerely prefer good to evil.
- 10 Love each other as much as brothers should,
and have a profound respect for each other.
- 11 Work for the Lord with untiring effort
and with great earnestness of spirit.
- 12 If you have hope, this will make you cheerful.
Do not give up if trials come; and keep on praying.
- 13 If any of the saints are in need you must share with them;
and you should make hospitality your special care.
- 14 Bless those who persecute you: never curse them, bless them.
- 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice and be sad with those in sorrow.
- 16 Treat everyone with equal kindness;
never be condescending but make real friends with the poor.
Do not allow yourself to become self-satisfied.
- 17 Never repay evil with evil
but let everyone see that you are interested only in the highest ideals.
- 18 Do all you can to live at peace with everyone.
- The word of the Lord.

Looking at the Text:

N-2 Romans 12:1-2, 9-18 (long form) or 1-2, 9-13 (short form)
Offering your living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God.

St Paul's letter to the Romans

In the last ten years of his life, St Paul wrote letters to the churches he had founded. He wrote to both communities and individuals, often responding to questions and or difficulties they were having. He teaches about belief in God and how to live this out in life. The letter to the Romans is the longest letter, making the point that the law itself can give us knowledge about how to live the Christian life, but ultimately, it is God, through Jesus, who gives us the power and the strength to live it. Through baptism, we enter into 'new' life with Jesus, as children of God, members of Christ's family, with all the love we need! Nothing can separate us from the love of Jesus, and this love enables our love.

In this reading

St Paul describes in a very real and practical way what it means to live a life of compassionate, merciful, self-giving love, modelled on God's merciful love, made visible to us in Jesus. Related to marriage, he says how vitally important it is to respect each other, be honest, hopeful and cheerful. Yes, trials will come — they are a normal part of life's ups and downs. But the way through, St Paul urges, is to keep working at the relationship, putting your partner first before yourself, offering yourself and all you have and are to the other, with determination, generosity and kindness. St Paul says 'make hospitality your special care', and that word 'hospitality' in relation to one another in a marriage means spending time together, listening to one another without jumping in with a 'fix-it' or your own story or any kind of judgment. This spending time together has to be planned, and carved out of your busy, demanding lives. If you don't spend quality time together, it's much harder to grow strong as a couple and be able to face the difficulties that come from a deeply peaceful, trusting 'centre'.

Reflecting on Scripture together

Use the 'Reflecting on Scripture together — a simple way' in the introduction 'Choosing your Wedding readings'.

Further Reflection

Following the 'slow reading' process, here are some questions for further reflection:

- Which are the words and phrases that particularly catch your attention in this reading?
- What is 'real' love and what is 'pretend' love?
- What are your hopes, dreams and 'highest ideals' for your own marriage?
- How have you handled difficult things in life so far? What sort of gifts and skills will you need for handling challenges together?
- How do you/will you make decisions together, and discover what is good and right for you as a couple and a family?
- Why would this be a good reading for your wedding?

Note about the Reading

This reading is given in a long and short form — either may be chosen.

These notes have been prepared by Caroline Dollard, Marriage & Family Life Project, CBCEW www.catholicfamily.org.uk This is one of a series of Liturgy Office resources to support the *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*. www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Marriage © 2016 Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales