

Reading

Jeremiah 31:31–34

I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the House of Judah.

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah.

- 31 See, the days are coming — it is the Lord who speaks —
when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel
and the House of Judah,
- 32 but not a covenant like the one I made with their ancestors
on the day I took them by the hand
to bring them out of the land of Egypt.
- 33 No, this is the covenant I will make with the House of Israel
when those days arrive — it is the Lord who speaks.
Deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it on their hearts.
Then I will be their God and they shall be my people.
- 34 There will be no further need for neighbour to try to teach neighbour,
or brother to say to brother, ‘Learn to know the Lord!’
No, they will all know me, the least no less than the greatest
— it is the Lord who speaks.
- The word of the Lord.

Looking at the Text:

O-9 Jeremiah 31:31-32a, 33-34a

I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah.

The prophet Jeremiah

Jeremiah was born a 'prophet', called by God from his mother's womb, before he even took a breath. You could say he was a born prophet, a born leader. His purpose was to give God's message to the kings and people of Judah. He lived through good times and times of persecution. The key themes in this book of the bible include listening and trusting God in our lives, staying faithful in relationships, and remembering that our love is rooted in God's everlasting love, who knows and loves us beyond our understanding! Jeremiah seeks to encourage us!

In this passage

From Jeremiah we hear the word 'covenant' — as a vow or promise that is faithful and everlasting. God has made a covenant of everlasting love with his people. In making our wedding vows to one another, before God and our families, we are promised by God that he is with us, strengthening our ability to make a loving, fruitful and life-long commitment in marriage every step of the way. The 'law of love' or 'covenant' which is God's law, is written on our hearts, and God's love is, and always will be, there for us, like an everlasting underground spring to draw from in good times and the difficult ones. This is part of the 'mystery' of our faith, difficult to put into words, but very real.

In the wedding service, you will be making a covenant or partnership of the whole of life with each other. This is established by freely giving your consent to giving yourselves to one another in marriage, and in speaking out your vows to one another, witnessed by the priest and your families and friends.

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:

- Think of a marriage you admire. What is it that makes it a 'good' marriage? What do you think has helped the couple?
- You may like to look at the words of the vows, and talk about them together. What do the words of each vow mean to you?
*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.*
- What do you like about this reading, and why might it be a good reading for your wedding?

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