



Mark 10:2-16

2 Some Pharisees approached Jesus and asked, 'Is it against the law for a man to divorce his wife?' They were testing him. **3** He answered them, 'What did Moses command you?' **4** 'Moses allowed us,' they said, 'to draw up a writ of dismissal and so to divorce.' **5** Then Jesus said to them, 'It was because you were so unteachable that he wrote this commandment for you. **6** But 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.' **10** Back in the house the disciples questioned him again about this, **11** and he said to them, 'The man who divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of adultery against her. **12** And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another she is guilty of adultery too.' **13** People were bringing little children to him, for him to touch them. The disciples turned them away, **14** 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. **15** I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' **16** Then he put his arms round them, laid his hands on them and gave them his blessing.

Other readings: Genesis 2:18-24 Psalm 127 (128) Hebrews 2:9-11

Jesus, on his journey to Jerusalem, has reached Judaea and some Pharisees question him about divorce. In answer Jesus quotes from the Book of Genesis some words which appear also at the end of our first reading: 'This is why a man must leave father and mother, and the two become one body.' Jesus reasserts teaching about marriage which people in earlier times were unwilling to accept, because they were 'so unteachable'. It calls for commitment and fidelity. The second piece of teaching is also relevant to families and relationships. The treatment of children is crucial to the health of a community.

Fidelity in marriage and a common endeavour to face difficulties are much needed in our time. The safety of children is an enormous concern and is rightly a priority. Not every marriage is ideal and there are some which cannot continue due to irreconcilable differences. In such situations great unhappiness can be experienced. Commitment and faithfulness, and loving guidance of young people and children, remain the basic foundations of a healthy and happy society. These are God-given principles, which reflect the faithful goodness of God.

How faithful am I to commitments undertaken?

Do I cherish those who are close to me?

We pray for our families that they may show courage and true love.

We pray for families who have suffered break-down that they may receive strength and support to rebuild shattered lives.