

**(Food for thought)**

Gospel: Mark 10:2-16

*Fidelity in a broken world*



Marriage is a "vocation." To be in a "vocation" is something one does - something that one is working at. Getting married does not automatically mean "happily ever after." No one else entering a serious endeavor just presumes being called an "athlete" or "college student" or "pianist" will guarantee success in that endeavor. Faithfulness in the marriage relationship is a vivid reminder that Christ stays with us in good times and bad. Unfortunately, sometimes marriages do fall apart; sometimes this happens over a long period - a splinter at a time; sometimes because of a sudden act of betrayal.

Today we see two examples of both the blessings and responsibilities of marital fidelity: one from the book of Genesis and the other from the Gospel of Mark. Both readings are particularly significant in light of recent events, future discussions at the Synod on the Family in October and the upcoming Holy Year of Mercy, beginning in December. Jesus presents the ideal today of a permanent loving relationship that reflects God's intentions for humans from the beginning. As it says in our Genesis reading, "the two become one flesh." They are inseparable. But we humans are weak, ignorant, make rash and immature decisions - and our good intentions sometimes fail miserably. While Jesus holds out the ideal, he also recognizes our human incompleteness; our hearts are not fully turned to him, nor do we give our hearts fully to one another.

The Gospel presents the vision of a whole new way of acting and being. Whether we are married, divorced, single or celibate, we all know how far we are from fully embracing that vision of new life. We struggle to live the Gospel ideal in all walks of life, including marriage, but we fall short. Yet, the Lord comforts us with the realization of how much we are loved by our God and the assurance that this love is unbreakable.

