

One Flesh

Daily Gospel / Liturgical Cycle C

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Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Mark 10: 1-12.

Jesus came into the district of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds gathered around him and, as was his custom, he again taught them. The Pharisees approached him and asked, "Is it lawful for a husband to divorce his wife?" They were testing him. He said to them in reply, "What did Moses command you?" They replied, "Moses permitted a husband to write a bill of divorce and dismiss her." But Jesus told them, "Because of the hardness of your hearts he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate." In the house the disciples again questioned Jesus about this. He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

Mark 10:1-12

Introductory Prayer:

Lord Jesus, I believe in your immeasurable love reflected in your gift of the Eucharist. I believe that you call me to share in this gift with my own gift of self. I trust that you will grant me the light and desire to sacrifice myself and purify my love for you and others. I love you, Lord, with this prayer. May it increase the authenticity of the love expressed in my daily life.

Petition:

Lord, help me to penetrate the meaning of "loving in the flesh."

1. Docile or 'Un-teachable'?

Jesus taught those who gathered to learn from him that they should keep their hearts open and docile. The Pharisees gather not as learners, but as those who "know better." They constantly look for problems and difficulties in Jesus' teaching. Their aim is to test him, to find what is wrong, or to trap him in his words. This they never manage to do. From his teaching in the Temple at the age of 12 till the present, no one has spoken like him—with authority and truth. How do I approach the teaching of Jesus and his Church? Am I, with faith, open to learn and change my behavior, if necessary? Or do I, with a hardened heart, look for a way to affirm my own truth?

2. Hardness of Heart:

To divorce or not to divorce? This question is not right! The correct question is: "How does God want us to love?" The difference lies in the state of our heart. The one who is open and loves God seeks to know his will. The one who is closed-minded is usually a slave of sin and so lacks the freedom to seek or know the truth. Such a person's only objective is to justify what he or she wants. Divorce can be justified—it was by Moses. Why? Because of our hardness of hearts, our not being ready to live the fullness of real love. Jesus speaks the truth and gives the grace to live it. Do I allow him to challenge me to live beyond the minimal, beyond the borders of "Thou shalt not," and to desire what he desires? What do I do to free myself from the sin and imperfections that keep me ignorant of God's true will in my life?

3. The Flesh of God's Plan:

The "flesh" that God created was holy, a gift: a Temple of God and destined for eternal life. Jesus became flesh and then left us his flesh, because we had lost sight of its true value and sacredness. It may be only in the Eucharist that we can regain the truth of our flesh and of our vocation to love, to self-donation. Crucified-Christ shatters our fleshy tendency to self-gratification. It substitutes "one flesh," one body, given for the life of others. The unity and indissolubility of marriage declare the key of love: We are no longer two but one flesh, one life, one interest, one vocation. Just as Jesus no longer can talk about "his own life" after giving us the Eucharist, so a married couple no longer can talk of "self," but only of the gift of "what God has joined together." What is my flesh for? The life of others?

Conversation with Christ:

Dear Lord, free my heart from all its attachment to sin and selfishness. Grant me a desire to know your will. Purify my respect, love and appreciation for the sacredness of my body and that of others, the sacred unity of marriage, and the sacred gift of your flesh in the Eucharist.

Resolution:

I will spend one hour in adoration reflecting with Christ on the gifts of life, love, marriage and the Eucharist, all seen more clearly in "his flesh."