



27th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year B 2nd & 3rd October 2021

Parish Priest:

Fr Tinh Nguyen
Presbytery: 9808 0650
Tinh.Nguyen@cam.org.au

Parish Secretary
Dominique Hockey
Amelia Younane

Parish Office Hours
Tuesday - Friday 9am—3pm

Baptisms & Weddings
Please contact the Parish Office.

St Scholastica's Primary School

Principal: Jenny Rohan
9808 7279
principal@ssbennettswood.catholic.edu.au

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Dear Parishioners at St Scholastica,

During the week, I have received a few phone calls from our parishioners asking me for an opinion about the petition that had been put out by **Melbourne Faithful** a few days ago. The purpose of the petition was to ask Archbishop Peter Comensoli not to proceed with the restructuring of the Archdiocese of Melbourne until restrictions on gatherings in parishes have been lifted. Some have argued that there is no time and the means to allow parishes to engage in a deeper listening to each other due to COVID-19 restrictions. For this reason, I strongly encourage you to visit the Archdiocesan website to learn more about the local Church as Mission Communities: <https://melbournecatholic.org/about/mission>. I have also included in Chimes a copy of the pamphlet which explains what a mission is so that you can have more informed knowledge about what the Archdiocese is purposing with **'Take the Way of the Gospel'**.

Suffice to say that I am not in a position to give you any advice about this as I am still trying to grapple with the proposal and better understand how the restructure will bring vitality back to our parishes. This process will take time and discernment over the next few years before it can become a reality, however, I hope that through a process of listening, discernment and dialogue we can achieve good outcomes of this restructure.

To conclude, I would like to quote the Archbishop's words about his vision when he spoke to the clergy and lay leaders of the Archdiocese of Melbourne in May 2021:

"It is a renewal of this vision for today that I want to explore with you over the coming months and years, so that we might walk together towards a more energised purpose for our local Church in the light of Pentecost. This will be a journey that will take time and effort, and we will need to take it together."

Therefore, let us begin with prayer - calling upon the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us.

Have a good weekend ahead!

With blessings and peace,

Fr Tinh Nguyen PP

For further information about 'Take the Way of the Gospel' please see:

- Re-Imagining our Local Church as Mission Communities: <https://melbournecatholic.org/about/mission>
- An Introduction to the Proposed Process: Pages 5-7 of Chimes



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WEEKLY CALENDAR 2021

Thursday 30 September

09.00am Mass via Zoom

Friday 1 October

09.00am Mass via Zoom followed by Adoration

07.30pm Prayer and Conversation via Zoom

Saturday 2 October

09.00am Mass via Zoom followed by Rosary

Sunday 3 October - 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

10.00am Mass via Zoom

11.30am Vietnamese Mass via Zoom

02.00pm Confirmation Lesson 5 - Via Zoom

Monday 4 October

No Service

Tuesday 5 October

09.00am Mass via Zoom

07.00pm Young Adults Group - The Search - Via Zoom

Wednesday 6 October

09.00am Mass via Zoom

07.30pm Alpha Meeting - Via Zoom

Thursday 7 October

09.00am Mass via Zoom

07.30pm Baptism Information Night

Friday 8 October

09.00am Mass via Zoom

07.30pm Prayer and Conversation via Zoom

Saturday 9 October

09.00am Mass via Zoom followed by Rosary

Sunday 10 October - 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time

10.00am Mass via Zoom

02.00pm Confirmation Lesson 6 - Via Zoom

A Prayer of Alpha Participants

Heavenly Father, may each and every Alpha session begin with your inspiration, continue with your help and produce the fruit of discipleship under your guidance. And although we point out the way, it is your Spirit who gives strength for the journey. We work only outwardly. Your Spirit instructs and enlightens our hearts. We water on the outside. Your Spirit gives the increase! Grant that we who labour to make disciples may trust not in our own work, but in your help! We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen!

Remembering Our Community

Sick

Maeve Coady, Kathleen Barr, Rachel Bransby, Winston Chester, Marian McQuinn and Stephen McQuinn, Frances Murray, Margaret Purcell

Anniversaries

Mary Ferdinands, Ralph Wates, Rex Fernandes, Paul Berto, Mary Helen Perera, Melanies Barr

Recently Deceased

Enid Jennings, Maria D'Agostino, Winston Chester

Conversations and Prayer on Zoom

Fr Think would like to invite all parishioners to join him for prayer and conversation over Zoom this **Friday 1st October at 7.30pm**. It is a best way to stay connected with each other. You can join the Zoom meeting by click on the link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3022571802?pwd=QzlleWp3M2JEdEY1Ullma1BOSkJK5QT09>

Meeting ID: 302 257 1802

Passcode: STSCHOLS

Church and Parish Office Closed due to Lockdown

Due to the lockdown continuing, the Church and Parish Office are closed. All masses are being held via Zoom. Please be aware that there is only one Zoom link to use for all masses. Just use the link at the time of the scheduled mass you wish to attend and you will have access.

Zoom Link for all Masses:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3022571802?pwd=QzlleWp3M2JEdEY1Ullma1BOSkJK5QT09>

Meeting ID: 302 257 1802

Passcode: STSCHOLS

If you need to get in contact with the Parish Office please do so via email on stschpar@bigpond.net.au or Dominique's mobile: 0419 518 855. You can also contact Fr Think directly on the Presbytery number: 9808 0650.

Thanksgiving Program

Due to the extended lockdown weekly Thanksgiving Envelopes are not able to be currently dropped in. If you would like to make a direct deposits for your Thanksgiving contribution, the parish account details can be found below.

- Account Name: St Scholastica's Parish
- BSB: 083 347
- Account Number: 68681 8033
- Reference: **Please use as reference:**
Envelope number

You can set up a direct debit or monthly credit card giving by contacting the parish office.

Quote of the Week

"When a man loves a woman, he has to become worthy of her. The higher her virtue, the more noble her character, the more devoted she is to truth, justice, goodness, the more a man has to aspire to be worthy of her. The history of civilisation could actually be written in terms of the level of its women."
Venerable Fulton Sheen

St Scholastica's acknowledges that we gather, pray and live together on the land of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nations.

Justice of the Peace Bryan 9808 4813
or 0428 883 462



NOTICEBOARD

Communion to the sick

Do you know anyone who is sick or housebound, who would like to receive a visit from Fr Thinh? Perhaps the sick/homebound person is feeling isolated from the parish community and would like to receive communion on a regular basis. Please phone the parish office on 9808 1006.

Baptism at St Scholastica's

It is a requirement of the parish that a Baptism information night must be attended prior to having your child baptised. Contact the parish office on 9808 1006 to make a booking into one of the monthly sessions. Next session: **Thursday 7th October 2021** at 7:30 pm via Zoom.

Automated External Defibrillator (AED)

St Scholastica's Parish would like to extend our thanks to one of our parishioners, Mr Bill Luscombe who has generously donated to our church a defibrillator. This is a vital piece of equipment which will go on to benefit the parish for years to come. All of our parishioners can use it, but of course, we hope to never have to. This equipment is located inside the sacristy. Thank you so much Bill!



Rosary Rally

Over a century ago OUR LADY began to appear at Fatima Portugal to 3 shepherd children; Lucia dos Santos and her cousins Francisco and Jacinta Marco. During her 6th and last apparition on 13th Oct 1917, Our Blessed Mother produced an incredible 'Miracle of the Sun'. The day the sun danced was witnessed by 70 thousand spectators and the miracle is reported to have been seen from as far away as up to 25 miles from the place of the apparition.

To commemorate the 104th anniversary of 'The Miracle of the Sun', Australia is to take part in the **National Public Rosary Rally on Saturday 16th October at 10am**

The purpose of this is to spread the important message of Fatima throughout the world for the Glory of God and Thurston Our Lady and the salvation of souls. It is hoped that The Rosary Rally will: inspire others to see that God is still important in our lives; touch and kindle the hearts of others to stand for God; promote unity by bringing people together in a life of prayer.

Zoom Link for Rosary Rally

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3022571802?pwd=QzlleWp3M2JEdEY1UllmalBOSk5JT09>

Meeting ID: 302 257 1802

Passcode: STSCHOLS

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MAJELLA BOWDEN (SABRELLS BAYVIEW ENG)	UNBREAKABLE ROCK: IDENTITY, BOOK, FAMILY, COUNTRY, LANGUAGE
MICHEL AMBRAS (ST. PAUL'S ENG. CANBERRA)	MISSION, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, & DIALOGUE WITH INDIGENOUS THEOLOGIES
ADWITE BENISE CHAMPION (MARRIAGE COLLEGE)	COUNTRY, LAND, & INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES
LAWRENCE MOLONEY (LA TRINITE ENG)	WAS MICHAEL BOWDEN A MISSIONARY?
JOHN STUART (LIVING WELL SPIRITUALITY CENTRE)	UNBREAKABLE ROCK, THE SPIRITUALITY OF CONVERSATION WRIT LARGE
ROSS MACKINNON (HAME)	UNBREAKABLE ROCK - A REVIEW
DARRELL JACKSON (SPIRITUALITY COLLEGE)	"LOVE OF SISTER SOIL" - REFLECTIONS AND FOOTPRINTS

EVENT ORGANISERS
ALVARO DA COSTA, SVD
HELEN STEARNY (CHAIR) - AJMD

WHEN
Saturday 2nd Oct 2021
3pm to 4pm AEDT

WHERE?
Online
Zoom Conference

REGISTER AT:
tinyurl.com/svdmissionday

Gospel Reflection

From today's Gospel reading:

"...a man shall leave father and mother and be joined to his wife,
and the two shall become one flesh.
Therefore what God has joined together, no human being must separate."

Reflection:

While our Church's marriage laws are meant to protect the institution of marriage for the common good, still, Jesus has taught mercy and forgiveness and in his ministry he kept persons primary. How then can the Church do the same? By holding fast to its current laws and restrictions? Or, while raising up the ideal, by also ministering to those wounded by their previous experiences in marriage, who now hope to start afresh in new relationships – and still be full participants in the church.?

So, we ask ourselves:

- By their love and commitment to one another which married couples have witnessed to me the blessings of the sacrament of marriage?
- What can I do or say to give support to those who are struggling in their commitment to one another?

St Scholastica's Parish is committed to creating a child safe culture that safeguards children and young people including the safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children and young people, children and young people with a disability, and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.



St Scholastica's Catholic Primary School



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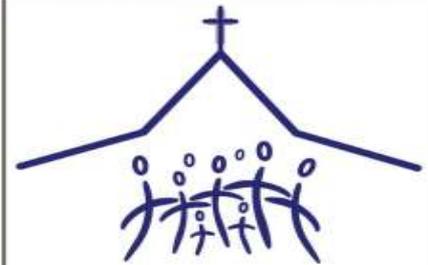


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The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is an approach to religious formation of **children**

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For further info please contact 9808 1006,
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Pray for
the Unborn



Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with Thee. Blessed art Thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.



'Go out to the whole world,
proclaim the Gospel to all creation.'
Mark 16:15

AN INTRODUCTION

This document provides a brief introduction into this process and what this invitation means for you and your parish.

What is "Take the Way of the Gospel" inviting us to?

We are being called – laypeople and clergy together – to a renewed sense of our missionary purpose. Exploring and dreaming a missionary way forward lies at the heart of our baptismal call to live out the Gospel. It is something that Pope Francis talks about in his Apostolic Letter, *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013): 'I dream of a "missionary option", that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation. The renewal of structures demanded by pastoral conversion can only be understood in this light: as part of an effort to make them more mission-oriented, to make ordinary pastoral activity on every level more inclusive and open.'

But why now?

Over many years, our lay people and clergy have identified the need to find new and fresh ways to proclaim the Gospel into our local communities. One aspect of this re-awakening is to attend to the manner in which these local communities of grace – be they parishes, language communities or movements of our Archdiocese – are arranged and function so that they bring renewed and ongoing life for God's people. In the context of our current COVID reality a sense of urgency to this re-imagining has also grown.

As Archbishop Peter A Comensoli has reflected, 'The Way of the Gospel – the path of missionary discipleship – has always been adapted by every generation to fit the local circumstances. How this is arranged has varied according to time and place. Now is our time; here is our place ... Our parishes will remain at the heart of the gathering of God's people locally, but we need to adapt the way we resource our local communities, including the placement of clergy, catechists and other lay leaders, to form Missions that comprise a family of faith communities.'

So what does being more 'mission-oriented' look like?

Pope Francis offers some guiding principles in *Evangelii Gaudium* (§28) for how a parish might become more missionary. They are worth reflecting on in the context of our own parishes here in Melbourne:

- Is our parish "in contact with the homes and lives of its people?"
- Is our parish "an environment for hearing God's word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration?"
- Does our parish "encourage and train its members to be evangelisers?"
- Is our parish "a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach?"



'In our day Jesus' command to "go and make disciples" echoes in the changing scenarios and ever new challenges to the Church's mission of evangelization, and all of us are called to take part in this new missionary "going forth". Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out ... to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the "peripheries" in need of the light of the Gospel.' POPE FRANCIS, *EVANGELII GAUDIUM* §30

What exactly is a "Mission"?

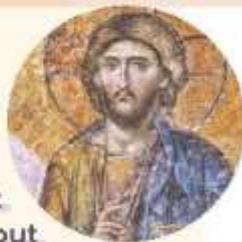
A Mission is a distinctive faith locality that lends itself to being lived out in family-like arrangements in the service of proclaiming the Gospel.

A MISSION IS:

- A local area, with commonalities in history, demographics, geography
- A collaborative focus on evangelisation, worship, formation and outreach
- A family of communities, working together for viability and vitality
- A reordering of ministerial and material resourcing
- A leadership of at least two priests, working as a team
- A strategic and operational decision making with lay leadership
- An intentional co-responsibility of all of the people of God
- A pooling and sharing of resources and administrative functions
- A move towards shared arrangements across communities, working in solidarity.

A MISSION IS NOT:

- Aimed at closing down parishes
- Focussed purely on data
- Driven by clergy shortages or falling parishioner numbers
- Aimed at destroying local community diversity and culture
- Creating centralised clerical leadership
- a plan to take over parish assets and finances.



At the heart of who we are is not all the buildings but the person of Jesus Christ, who enters into our lives and who we then share with others.

ARCHBISHOP PETER A. DOMENGOLI

How will Missions help us to become more missionary? What are their aims?

Undoubtedly, there are many parishes who are already exploring new and exciting ways of becoming more missionary-focussed. But it can also be said that the structure of parish life—our primary way to know the Lord through Word, Sacraments, and Service—is in need of a Spirit-filled renewal. Our people and our ways of "doing" things are tired and in need of reinvigoration.

Embarking on Missions is not about changing our core mission of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, but about the ways in which we do this that are relevant to our place and time, and with good planning for the future. We are not the parishes of 40 years ago – and we need to be courageous and creative in our thinking around how to embrace the challenges and opportunities that today's landscape presents us with. How many of us, in the silence of our hearts, have looked at our hardworking parish volunteers and wondered who will step up and take over in the future? How many of us have looked around at Mass and wondered why there aren't more of our local families present? Or how often have we wondered if our own children or grandchildren might experience that same joy and passion for the Catholic faith that we have?

The formation of Missions provides us with a process to work together in becoming more missionary. It has three particular aims:

AIM #1: GREATER EFFECTIVENESS IN SHARING THE GOSPEL

Coming together as local faith communities enables greater collaboration and a stronger sense of shared mission. This then enables our local parish communities become alive with missionary disciples of Jesus Christ fully living their baptismal call.

AIM #2: VIBRANCY, VITALITY, VIABILITY

Vibrant communities are filled with passionate followers of Jesus Christ who share:

- vision to grow the Kingdom of God. They have a clear direction and purpose.
- mission where each person is seen as uniquely called and gifted to share the Gospel and is equipped and sent by the parish to live their call.

Vibrant parishes have a growing number of members engaged in evangelisation, fellowship, worship, discipleship formation and outreach.

Vital communities understand:

- their surrounding neighbourhood and culture;
- that people are searching for a deeper spiritual connection in their lives where their hopes, joys and anxieties can be expressed;

Our parishes will remain at the heart of the gathering of God's people locally, but we need to adapt the way we resource our local communities, including the placement of clergy, catechists and other lay leaders, to form Missions that comprise a family of faith communities.

ARCHBISHOP PETER A. COMENOLI



- that what happened in the past may no longer fit into where the parish is being called today. They are hospitable to new people and new ideas that are different from what has always been done;
- that new possibilities for ministry and service will emerge and they can adapt to these new opportunities in ways that are flexible.
- the importance of respecting their past while being hope-filled for their future.

Viable communities have the resources, and are able to mobilise those resources, for their common vision and mission

- They have sufficient income streams to fund and grow their mission;
- Their buildings support the needs of their mission and ministries rather than sapping their resources;
- They can serve their communities in a sustainable way and parishioner financial contributions are respected and used prudently.

AIM #3: EQUITABLE SHARING OF RESOURCES

The formation of Missions helps to ensure that spiritual, ministerial and material resources are more equitably distributed across the Archdiocese, based on current needs rather than the needs of generations past.

This means recognising the changing needs in particular parish communities, caused by growth or decline in the numbers of people attending Mass as a result of demographic change. It also ensures that the skills, gifts and resources of all our parishioners (young and old) are both recognised and utilised to their fullest capacity, and provides for more sustainable ministry.

So what happens next?

This is the start of a long-term journey for our local Church in Melbourne. In this early stage, we are inviting parishes to begin a conversation with members of their local community.

Your Parish Priest and a parish representative would have attended a regional information session in August/September and been presented with illustrative Mission groupings. These illustrative groupings have been developed using data gathered from the ABS, Mass counts, population projections and local demographics. They also include specific benchmarks to help ensure the vibrancy, vitality and viability for the Gospel mission of that area.

Illustrative Mission groupings are a starting point for discernment and conversation, they are not set in stone. Each parish will eventually participate in a Mission and is being asked to consult, discern and plan towards this with other parishes in their area.

Consultation and discernment may result in groups of parishes proposing Mission groupings quite different to the ones initially being suggested. Groups of parishes are encouraged to develop innovative and creative ideas as they discern and work together to plan how they might share their gifts and resources for mission.

Read more about Take the Way of the Gospel:
www.melbournecatholic.org/mission



The 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year B - 2nd & 3rd October 2021

Entrance Antiphon: Cf. Est 4:17

Within your will, O Lord, all things are established, and there is none that can resist your will. For you have made all things, the heaven and the earth, and all that is held within the circle of heaven; you are the Lord of all.

First Reading: Gen 2:18-24

A reading from the book of Genesis

They were two in one flesh.

The Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helpmate.' So from the soil the Lord God fashioned all the wild beasts and all the birds of heaven. These he brought to the man to see what he would call them, each one was to bear the name the man would give it. The man gave names to all the cattle, all the birds of heaven and all the wild beasts. But no helpmate suitable for man was found for him. So the Lord God made the man fall into a deep sleep. And while he slept, he took one of his ribs and enclosed it in flesh. The Lord God built the rib he had taken from the man into a woman, and brought her to the man. The man exclaimed:

'This at last is bone from my bones, and flesh from my flesh! This is to be called woman, for this was taken from man.'

This is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife, and they become one body.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Ps 127. R. v.5

R. May the Lord bless us all the days of our lives.

O blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways! By the labour of your hands you shall eat. You will be happy and prosper. R.

Your wife will be like a fruitful vine in the heart of your house; your children like shoots of the olive, around your table. R.

Indeed thus shall be blessed the man who fears the Lord. May the Lord bless you from Zion in a happy Jerusalem all the days of your life! May you see your children's children. On Israel, peace! R.

Second Reading: Heb 2:9-11

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

He who sanctifies, and those who are sanctified have one origin.

We see in Jesus one who was for a short while made lower than the angels and is now crowned with glory and splendour because he submitted to death; by God's grace he had to experience death for all mankind.

As it was his purpose to bring a great many of his sons into glory, it was appropriate that God, for whom everything exists and through whom everything exists, should make perfect, through suffering, the leader who would take them to their salvation. For the one who sanctifies, and the ones who are sanctified, are of the same stock; that is why he openly calls them brothers.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia!
If we love one another, God will live in us in perfect love.
Alleluia!

Gospel: Mark 10:2-16

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark

What God has joined together, no one must divide.

Some Pharisees approached Jesus and asked, 'Is it against the law for a man to divorce his wife?' They were testing him. He answered them, 'What did Moses command you?' 'Moses allowed us' they said 'to draw up a writ of dismissal and so to divorce.' Then Jesus said to them, 'It was because you were so unteachable that he wrote this commandment for you. But from the beginning of creation God made them male and female. This is why a man must leave father and mother, and the two become one body. They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide.' Back in the house the disciples questioned him again about this, and he said to them, 'The man who divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another she is guilty of adultery too.' People were bringing little children to him, for him to touch them. The disciples turned them away, 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. I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' Then he put his arms round them, laid his hands on them and gave them his blessing.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Communion Antiphon: Lam 3:25

The Lord is good to those who hope in him, to the soul that seeks him.

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Year B - 9 & 10 October 2021

First Reading: Wis 7:7-11

Second Reading: Heb 4:12-13

Gospel: Mark 10:17-30

Scripture Commentary for the 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year B

The issue of marriage and divorce, which is the common theme between the First Reading and the Gospel today, appears rather intrusively at this point in Mark's Gospel. Jesus has been instructing his disciples concerning his coming passion. The next issue will be that of the detachment discipleship will require in the matter of wealth. It may be that St Mark has placed these two issues – radical fidelity in married life and radical detachment in the matter of wealth – one after the other at this point as concrete illustrations of the demands of discipleship. That is, both have to do with areas where the following of Jesus takes on a path that runs strongly counter to prevailing customs and standards – something as valid, of course, in our own day as in the time of Jesus.

That said, any pastor would be aware that no Sunday Gospel read out through the year will require more sensitive handling than this one. Any congregation today will include a considerable number of people in second marriages or people with family members in that situation. In many, if not most cases, the situation will have come about through circumstances beyond their control or from which they cannot now responsibly free themselves. To simply read out the rulings of Jesus in the Gospel without comment or nuance would be to turn Gospel into Law and simply add to a burden of guilt that may already be oppressive.

It does seem clear from the New Testament record that Jesus did rule out divorce and remarriage. This was something that set his community's standards in the matter clearly apart from what prevailed in the Judaism of his day and in the wider Greco-Roman world. That said, we must take into account that life expectancy in the ancient world was less than half that prevailing in developed Western societies today. Moreover, Jesus and the early community lived in the expectation that the world as presently constituted was soon – perhaps in the very same generation – going to pass away (cf. Mark 9:1). Contemplation of a second marriage in such a situation would have been a very different proposition from what it is in societies where people live much longer and where the sense that the present shape of the world is going to be around indefinitely prevails. Already the 'exceptive clause' in the version of Jesus' rulings on divorce in Matthew's Gospel (5:32; 19:9) shows some accommodation to new situations in which believers found themselves. Moreover, the reality is that people make mistakes and relationships fail – something which longer life spans and the high premium currently placed upon personal freedom and development make more prevalent. The Church has to find a way to help people grow through failure and find in it an experience of grace and deepened knowledge of God.

Jesus' restoration of lifelong fidelity in marriage reclaims the original design of God expressed in the creation story of Genesis 2-3. The First Reading, Genesis 2:18-24 offers an extract from this to which Jesus makes appeal in the Gospel. What we have in the text is not 'history' but an 'aetiological narrative': a story cast back in the time of origins to account for what is or what ought to be in the present – here the social institution of marriage. Making no mention of procreation, the text displays a remarkable sense of the companionship, friendship and mutual recognition in love that should surround sexual union. The love expressed in the union of two in one flesh should simply be the most intimate physical expression of a commitment in companionship and intimacy, embracing the totality of life.

The Mosaic law did not 'permit' divorce. It simply recognised it as a reality in human life and sought, on 'harm minimisation process', to reduce the harsh effects it could have upon women. The bill of divorce certified that she was free from any suspicion of having simply abandoned her husband (Deut 24:1-4). Jesus in the Gospel, Mark 10:2-12 (13-16), insists that this provision, which he sees as introduced by Moses because of human 'hardness of heart,' must yield before the initial design of the Creator revealed in the creation story standing at the head of the Bible. The Kingdom of God, the onset of which is the background to all his teaching, seeks to reclaim this original design of the Creator or, better, to bring it to realisation for the first time. The community of disciples, as the 'beachhead' of the Kingdom in the world, are called to live out and bear witness to this original ideal.

In the Second Reading, from Hebrews 2:9-11, the idea of God 'making perfect through suffering' may need some nuance; biblical thought does not clearly distinguish consequence (operative here) from intention.

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