

**DIVORCE:
YES OR NO?**
(MARK 10:2-16)

The Gospel story presents us with several incidents in which Jesus is asked a question which will put him on the spot. Very often the issue concerns the observance of the Sabbath or a point about the interpretation of the Law.

In today's episode the subject is divorce. Mark sets the scene with some Pharisees asking Jesus whether divorce is permissible under the Law. However, it is clear that this is not a neutral question but one asked with hostile intent by characters who already know that the answer is yes. As with most aspects of Jewish life, there were different interpretations of the Law. Generally, Jesus would be on the more lenient side of these views, but in the case of divorce, he is more demanding even than those who would adopt a strict opinion on the matter. He forces his opponents to modify Moses' command in the event of the breakdown of marriage, to a concession given in view of people's "hardness of heart" in blinding themselves to God's original vision of unity and mutuality as set forth in Genesis.

The background to this controversy is that divorce was a common occurrence in the society and culture of Jesus' day. Under Roman law, a woman could divorce her husband, a detail which occurs in Jesus' explanation to his disciples. ■

REFLECT

There are many aspects to this question of divorce and Jesus' attitude to it. One would be the nature of the male-dominated society of the day and the place of women within it. Marriages were arranged between the fathers of the couple and had the appearance more of a contract than anything else. Some of the grounds suggested for divorce were ridiculously flimsy.

The idea of marriage as a contract has given way in recent years to that of a covenant of life and love between the partners. The model for this is the relationship between Christ and the church, which in turn is based on the covenant between YHWH and Israel in the Hebrew scriptures. In this understanding, the covenant cannot be so much broken as betrayed. Hence the attitude of the church that it is possible, despite appearances to the contrary, that a marriage never really existed and so can be declared null.

However, we might keep in mind that when Jesus is actually faced with someone in an irregular marriage situation, he does not tell her off or enter into a discussion on the nature of marriage itself. As a result of the manner in which he treats the Samaritan woman, not only does she herself come to faith in him, but she then acts as an apostle to her townsfolk who similarly come to believe. The list of Jesus' ancestors, given to us by Matthew, mentions four women whose relationships with the fathers of their children is questionable in the extreme. So while Jesus presents us with the ideal, with which probably no one would disagree, the Bible also presents us with the picture of God working through situations which fall short of this vision. When it comes to pastoral practice, the best should not be the enemy of the good. ■

SAY

With the Lord there is mercy, and fullness of redemption.

DO

Look at plants growing. Any relationship has to grow or it dies. The covenant reveals God's way of relating to human beings and is the model for the way Christians should understand marriage. Take some time to reflect on this.



LEARN

Divorce seems to have been taken for granted at the time of Jesus.

There was no one school of thought in interpreting the Law among the Pharisees (later the Rabbis).

The principal pair of teachers at the time of Jesus were Shammai, who represented the strict interpretation, and Hillel, who was of a more moderate opinion.

Jesus' teaching was closer to that of Hillel, except in the matter of divorce.

PARISH OF DROMORE

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Twenty – Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sunday 7th October 2018

Sunday Mass Times

St Colman's Dromore All Saints Ballela
Sunday 11.00am Sunday 9.45am

Weekday Mass Times: St Colman's

Mon, Wed, & Thurs- 9.30am: Liturgy of the Word with Eucharist

Tues & Fri : Mass – 9.30am

Sat: 10-11am: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Weekday Mass times: All Saints

Thursday – 7.00pm

Ballela Anniversaries

Sun 7: Frank Magee

Sun 14: Daniel & Margaret Devlin

Dromore Anniversaries

Sun 7: Hugh Downey

Sun 14: Daniel Donaldson

James & Margaret Kelly and

Deceased members of the Kelly family

John & Bridget Maginess

Offertory Promise Collection £813.42

Readers - Dromore

Sun 14: Katie Rice

Do This In Memory, Enrolment Sunday

Will take place on Sun 14th Oct in both churches.

Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de

Paul

Will visit both churches today, **Sun 7th Oct** to speak about their work in Africa. A collection will be taken up at mass for the charity, please be as generous as possible.

Sick Visits

The sick of the parish will be visited as follows:

Tues 9th Oct – Dromore

Tea and Chat

Tea and Chat will take place on Sun 14th of Oct in St Colmans hall Dromore after 11am mass.

Everyone welcome.

Church collectors-Oct- All Saints.

Katie Lennon & Dermot McCusker

Parish Draw Winners Week 26

£100	Bill Lennon	443
£50	Joseph Eadie	280
£30	Carmel Hillen	581
£20	Maureen & Arthur Brooker	370

Weight Watchers Class

Join our friendly Weightwatchers class in St Colmans Hall Dromore every Tuesday morning at 10am. With 11 weeks to Christmas, what have you to lose only those extra pounds? Contact Orla on 07986326099 if you have any queries.

Dromore Cathedral Mothers' Union

Has invited the ladies of our parish to their visitors evening on Wednesday 24th October at 8pm. Mrs Sharon Porter who runs a successful Coffee Shop, is an accomplished baker and she also has a very moving and interesting tale to tell. If you would like to attend please contact Mary Burns on 07917517520 by 19th of October.

Autumn Leaves Charity Dance

A Dance will take place on **19th Oct** in St Colmans Hall Dromore in aid of N.I. Air Ambulance. Music is by Brian & Chris and doors open at 8pm, admission is £6 which includes supper. Come along and bring a friend.

Irish language Classes

Places available in fun Irish language classes for primary school children each Monday in The Lodge, Castlewellan, P1-P3: 6pm-6.45pm, P4-P7: 7pm-7.45pm. Also places still available in Irish language GCSE-Level, AS-Level and A2-Level evening classes. For more information contact Glór Uachtar Tíre on 028 437 70331/ 07501 252027 or email gloruachtartire@hotmail.co.uk

Prayer for the Day

Lord, teach me to know the state of my heart and to have insight into its desires and drives. Purify my heart by your grace: make it humble and contrite, and wash me clean in the blood of Christ.