**7 October | 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time | Mark 10:2-16**

So often in this section of Mark (8-10) reference is made to the cost of discipleship. Any married couple knows that a lifetime relationship costs! A married couple can give each other material gifts but the giving of one’s self completely and selflessly is the ultimate gift. Divorce is truly painful when there is the feeling that ‘I could not give you any more that I have.’

So often in patriarchal cultures that have made women the possession of men, they have become easily disposed of. Even a society as moral as the Jewish one of Jesus’ day, had a fairly high rate of divorce. Jesus brings the question back to God’s original purpose for marriage as set out in the Genesis creation story.

In Mark divorce has an absolute prohibition. But both Matthew 19:9 and Paul 1 Cor 7:15 recognise there are exceptional situations to the ideal in Mark. The passage goes on to reiving the Reign of God as a Little Child as Jesus blesses them. Children cannot earn or perform useful work. They receive everything as pure gift. Surely one of the greatest of gifts is a warm and happy marriage with the presence of God in it! A sacramental marriage.

**14 October | 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time 14th | Mark 10:17-27**

This is a study in human relations. A rich man goes away sad. We are not told his age. His attachment to wealth prevents him from achieving what he most desires, to inherit eternal life. He is a good person and when challenged on the commandments that the rich and powerful would most easily break, he truly asserts he has kept them all his life.

It is all an exploration into what is the true meaning of ‘good’. Perhaps you have heard the saying: “Money is not the most important thing in life” with the added “But it’s a long way ahead of what comes in second place!”

The problem with this wealthy and powerful man is a sense of emptiness. That is why he comes to Jesus, seeking something more in life. The challenge Jesus offers him is beyond him, despite the love that goes with it. And so follows Jesus’ comment on how hard it is to let go of all the things that prevent the true search for the road to real discipleship.

**21 October | 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time | Mark 10:36-45**

The third major failure on the part of the disciples takes place here. Each failure has been preceded by Jesus’ announcement of his passion, death, and resurrection. Peter refuses to accept such a path for Jesus and is told that he is a Satan; then on the road the disciples respond to a passion prediction, Jesus’ self-giving service, by arguing about their own greatness; now the response to the prediction is a power grab by James and John. Matthew, to prevent further embarrassment, has their mother come and do the asking.

Note the indignation of the other ten, angry because they did not think of it themselves! How intriguing that from the earliest days of the Christian church the message has been proclaimed but not heard that the quest for power, privilege, and position has been the greatest obstacle and source of scandal to the faithful. The words of Jesus ring down through the ages, but so often on deaf ears, “The Son of Man has come not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

**28 October | 30th Sunday in Ordinary Time | Mark 10:46-52**

Reaching this end story of the heart of Mark’s gospel which began with the difficult case of the healing if the Blind Man of Bethsaida, way back in ch.8, we now have our concluding framing story of Blind Bartimaeus. This is one of my favourite biblical characters. No way is he going to allow anyone to stop him. Despite the crowd’s rebuke he shouts the louder until he is heard. He addresses Jesus as Son of David, a Messianic title that previously was silenced by Jesus. Now as the group near Jerusalem, there is no more need for silence. We will see what ‘messiah’ now means.

Bartimaeus throws off his cloak, leaving all to follow Jesus. He does it eagerly and quickly. There is great faith behind the cries for healing on the part of this man. He requests his sight back. So much blindness has accompanied our journey over the past weeks. Now, with clear and open eyes, Bartimaeus follows Jesus on the way! The way of the cross! At last, a disciple who understands and follows! With open eyes of faith like his we are all invited to accompany Jesus to Jerusalem, to his passion and death, but always in trust of resurrection.