

## First Reading

Song of Solomon 2:10–14 & 8:6–7

I am my beloveds and my beloved is mine

My beloved speaks and says to me:

“Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away;

for lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.

The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come,

and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.

The fig tree puts forth its figs, and the vines are in blossom;

they give forth fragrance.

Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.”

I am my beloveds and my beloved is mine

O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the covert of the cliff,

let me see your face, let me hear your voice,

for your voice is sweet, and your face is comely.

Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm;

for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave.

Its flashes are flashes of fire, a most vehement flame

Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it.

If a man offered for love all the wealth of his house,

it would be utterly scorned.

I am my beloveds and my beloved is mine

## Second Reading

Shakespeare, Sonnet 116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments. Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove:  
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.  
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks  
Within his bending sickle's compass come:  
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.  
If this be error and upon me proved,  
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

## Third Reading

From "The Irrational Season"  
Madeleine L'Engle

Ultimately there comes a time when a decision must be made. Ultimately two people who love each other must ask themselves how much they hope for as their love grows and deepens, and how much risk they are willing to take. It is indeed a fearful gamble. Because it is the nature of love to create, a marriage itself is something which has to be created. To marry is the biggest risk in human relations that a person can take. If we commit ourselves to one person for life this is not, as many people think, a rejection of freedom; rather it demands the courage to move into all the risks of freedom, and the risk of love which is permanent; into that love which is not possession, but participation. It takes a lifetime to learn another person. When love is not possession, but participation, then it is part of that co-creation which is our human calling.