

The Sacrament of Marriage

March 5, 2018







What is a *sacrament*?

An outward sign instituted by Christ to confer grace. *See CCC 1131.*

(Grace is the free and undeserved gift that God gives us to enable us to respond to our vocation to become His adopted sons and daughters. *CCC Glossary.*)

Which sacrament must be received first?

Baptism. *See CCC 1213.*



**What special kind of grace,
necessary for us to enter heaven,
does Baptism confer?**

Sanctifying grace.

How can we lose the gift of sanctifying grace?

By committing a mortal sin.

What are the three elements of a mortal sin?

1. Grave matter (i.e., gravely wrong).
2. Full knowledge (of the grave sinfulness).
3. Deliberate consent (i.e., freely and voluntarily).

How do we escape the state of mortal sin and regain sanctifying grace?

By repenting and receiving the sacrament of Reconciliation.

**While in a state of mortal sin we may
not receive the sacrament of . . .**

Holy Eucharist. CCC 1415.

How did God begin to reveal His sacramental plan for marriage in the Old Testament?

By inspiring His prophets to use marriage imagery to characterize God's covenant with Israel. For example, *Hosea 1-3*; *Isaiah 54*.

See CCC 1611.

Where do we find Christ instituting the Sacrament of Marriage?

The Wedding at Cana. *John 2.*

Read CCC 1613.

Where do we find Christ instituting the Sacrament of Marriage?

Christ's express teachings about marriage and divorce. CCC 1614.

Matthew 5:31-32; Matthew 19:1-12.

Mark 10:1-12.

Luke 16:18.

The analogy of marriage to Christ and the Church

Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, chapter 5,
especially verses 31-32.

**Was marriage always
considered a sacrament, or
was that just a medieval
invention?**

Ancient Authorities

Ancient prayerbooks contained prayers used at weddings and included references to the special graces granted to newly married persons.

St. Ignatius of Antioch (died around 107 AD)

If he [a Christian] should marry, the union should be made with the consent of the bishop, so that the marriage may be according to the Lord and not merely of lust.

Tertullian

How shall we suffice for the telling of that happiness of that marriage **which the Church arranges, which the sacrifice strengthens, on which the blessing sets a seal,** which the angels proclaim, and which has the Father's approval?

St. Augustine

Of this Sacrament the substance undoubtedly is that the man and the woman who are joined together in wedlock, should remain inseparable as long as they live....

“Official Church pronouncements”

Pope Innocent IV listed matrimony among the sacraments in 1208.

Council of Florence (1438-45) listed matrimony among the seven sacraments.

Reaffirmed at the Council of Trent (1545-63)

Form-Matter-Minister

1. The *Form* of matrimony is found in the marriage vows repeated by the couple.
2. The *Matter* of matrimony is the couple themselves.
3. The *Minister* of matrimony is . . . also the couple themselves!

What special graces are associated with this sacrament?

The sacrament of Matrimony signifies the union of Christ and the Church. It gives spouses the grace to love each other with the love with which Christ has loved His Church; the grace of the sacrament thus perfects the human love of the spouses, strengthens their indissoluble unity, and sanctifies them on the way to eternal life.

(CCC 1661, in handout)

**The Church's Code of Canon
Law prescribes other
requirements for a valid
sacramental marriage that
Catholics are obliged to
observe!**

The 3 Formal Requirements of a Catholic Sacramental Marriage

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2. A Catholic clergyman must preside.
3. There must be two other witnesses.

What is the consequence if a Catholic disregards the required form of marriage?

That Catholic commits a grave sin and may not receive the Sacraments until the situation is corrected. *See CCC 1650.*

Let's explore this a little more

Where does the Church get off barring people from receiving Holy Eucharist?

“Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord.” *1 Corinthians 11:27.*

Let's explore this a little more

From this flows the teaching of the Catechism: “Anyone conscious of a grave sin must receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before coming to Communion.” CCC 1385.

Let's explore this a little more

A person who is conscious of grave sin is not to celebrate Mass or receive the body of the Lord without previous sacramental confession unless there is a grave reason and there is no opportunity to confess.
CCL 916.

Let's explore this a little more

Those who have been excommunicated . . .
and others obstinately persevering in
manifest grave sin are not to be admitted
to holy communion. CCL 915.

The further implications of the requirements of form...

What if your Catholic child/sibling/parent or friend decides to marry outside the Church?

What is a “convalidation”?

It is a special kind of celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage used when (1) the couple is already married outside the Church and (2) at least one of the couple was Catholic at the time of the non-Catholic wedding.

The Three Intentions Necessary for a Sacramental Marriage

1. Permanence
2. Faithfulness
3. Openness to children

How do we square permanent marriage with readily available divorce?

“Marriage” is a word with multiple meanings.

It can mean the permanent sacramental union of Christian marriage.

Or it can mean the changeable and inherently unstable legal institution of civil marriage.

Is divorce always sinful?

See Malachi 2:13-16.

It can happen that one of the spouses is the innocent victim of a divorce decreed by civil law; this spouse has therefore not contravened the moral law. CCC 2386.

As for separation...

If either of the spouses causes grave mental or physical danger to the other spouse or to the offspring or otherwise renders common life too difficult, that spouse gives the other a legitimate cause for leaving[.]

CCL 1153 § 1.

Divorce

The “exception clauses” in Matthew?

The Pharisees’ debate and Jesus’ teaching.

Deuteronomy 24:1-4. The rival schools of
Shammai and Hillel.



Exception Clauses-Translations

1. “unless the marriage is unlawful”
2. “except for unchastity”
3. “except it be for fornication”
4. “except for the case of dismissal”
5. “lewd conduct is a separate case”

Three Catholic theories of the exception clause

ONE. Jesus meant that divorce would be permissible in case of adultery, but remarriage was still forbidden.

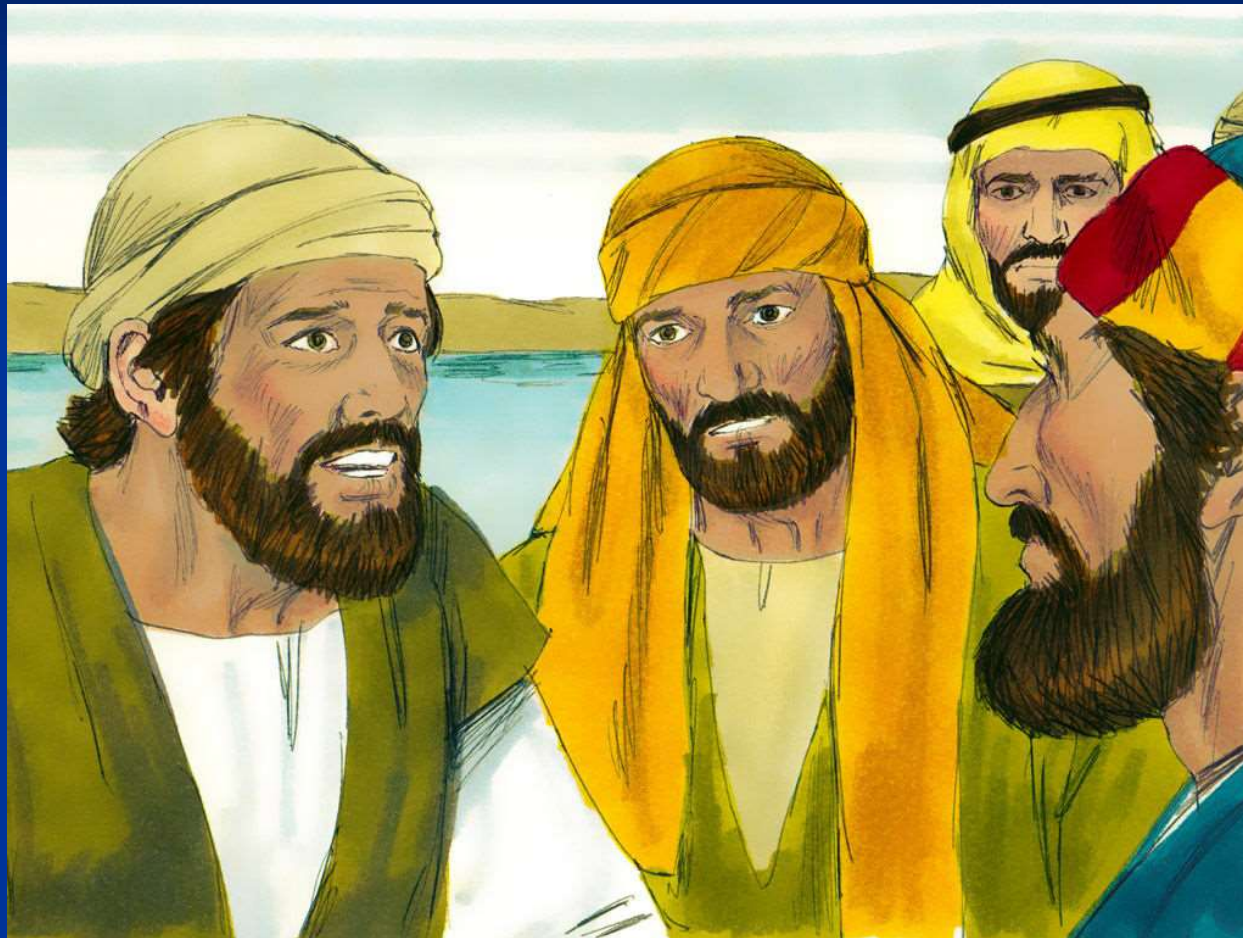
Three Catholic theories of the exception clause

TWO. Jesus meant the “exception clause” to be a parenthetical that excludes OT grounds for divorce. Something like “Whoever divorces his wife—and I’m setting aside all excuses, like adultery—and marries another commits adultery.”

Three Catholic theories of the exception clause

THREE. Jesus meant that divorce and remarriage are permitted only if the original marriage was unlawful, such as incestuous marriages.

The Apostles' reaction at Mt 19:10



What is a *declaration of nullity*?

A formal Church decree that what appeared externally to be a valid sacramental marriage was not, on account of some defect or impediment that existed at the time of the wedding ceremony.

Commonly referred to as an “annulment.”

Three general categories of reasons for invalidity?

1. Defects of form (when one or both participants are Catholic)
2. Defects in the parties' consent
3. Other impediments

Annulment grounds

1. A Catholic is involved and the Catholic form was not observed
2. Coercion or duress
3. Fraud
4. Youth
5. Consanguinity

Annulment grounds

6. A prior marriage that has never been decreed null (and the ex-spouse is still living)
7. A firm intention against openness to children
8. A firm intention against faithfulness
9. A firm intention against permanence

Annulment grounds

10. A grave defect of discretion of judgment concerning the essential matrimonial rights and duties

What happens if a declaration of nullity is granted?

1. The parties are free to marry in the Church.
2. Usually with the proviso that they must have a “marriage readiness assessment” first.

Odds and Ends

What are “pre-Cana classes”?

Before marrying in the Church, couples must participate in marriage preparation classes set up by the Church. These are sometimes called “pre-Cana classes” after Jesus’ first miracle at the wedding in Cana.

Odds and Ends

What is a “mixed marriage”?

A marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic baptized Christian. Such a marriage requires “the *express permission* of ecclesiastical authority.” CCC 1635.

Odds and Ends

What if a Catholic wants to marry a non-baptized person?

This situation is called “disparity of cult,” and not a mixed marriage. Such a marriage requires “an *express dispensation*.” CCC 1635.

Odds and Ends

Does my non-Catholic spouse-to-be have to promise to raise the children Catholic?

No! Rather, the Catholic party must promise to do his or her best to ensure the baptism and religious education of the children and the other party must be made aware of this. CCC 1635.

“Same-sex marriage”

Society’s view of sexuality and marriage is in chaos, and the law, predictably, is following suit.

The Catholic view is that a spiritual same-sex marriage is impossible and that the legal recognition of same-sex unions as “marriages” is unwise.

Catholic bishops' statement

**BETWEEN MAN AND WOMAN: QUESTIONS
AND ANSWERS ABOUT MARRIAGE AND
SAME-SEX UNIONS**

(You can google it.)

