

The Sacrament of Marriage

I. How Does Our Modern Culture See Marriage and Love?

- A. *Reasons Why Marriage Is An Outdated Institution That Doesn't Benefit Most People.* Monica Selo. June 30, 2024. <https://msselo297.medium.com/reasons-why-marriage-is-an-outdated-institution-that-doesnt-benefit-most-people-cae86a4de59d>.

"Marriage is an outdated societal milestone that is still subconsciously ingrained and coveted in modern society. Does marriage still serve a purpose in the 21st century and should there be an alternative way for partners to cement their love and deepen their commitment to one another? A question I ask myself is whether marriage is even necessary.

Traditionally and historically marriage was an institution that trapped women and only served to benefit men. Marriage served as a transaction; financially and in terms of passing over "property". A woman went from being her father's property to her husband's property. Her husband would "own" her and be in control of all of the money and assets."

- B. *Marriage: What Value Does It Add In a Busy Modern Society?* Rohan Bedi. January 14, 2023. <https://www.fairobserver.com/culture/marriage-what-value-does-it-add-in-a-busy-modern-society/#>.

"Marriages can become long-term prisons for silent suffering. Couples experience "prolonged hurt, deep-seated resentment, a lack of forgiveness, virtually no real communication, and zero intimacy." No wonder the "Gray Divorce" is on the rise. Marriage counselors point out that couples married for long periods of time divorce once the distractions from "career, kids, schools, and community subsidies" and underlying long-term issues rise to the surface.

From a man's perspective, the typical story would run like this: the romance and intimacy are long gone, the wife nags, he remains interested in sex, while the wife seems to have lost interest after childbirth. Initially this may be due to hormones and later, the distractions of a growing child. Eventually a communication gap descends on the relationship. Conversation with other men seems much more interesting, especially when discussing politics and sports, while the wife becomes a source of bother- someone with constant demands and criticism. Women are also actively exiting what they see as dead relationships. Their thinking has shifted, and new questions on happiness and self-fulfillment occupy center stage. Their economic independence and longer lives take precedence."

- C. Let's start with the premise that love is the necessary foundation of marriage. That being our premise, let's look at marriage through love songs because in many ways, a sociologist or theologian would tell us that love songs in the popular culture may tell us more about

how we view love and marriage than how we might respond under clinical or classroom settings. We will look at love songs that made the top 10 hit parade in their times.

- i. *"I Will Always Love You"* by Whitney Houston. Except that she tells the one she loves that she is leaving and will never be a part of his life.
- ii. *"Something"* by The Beatles. It's something, but he never gets around to telling us what it is!
- iii. *"Baby Love"* by the Supremes. It's got a nice beat, and you can dance to it, but at 3:00 a.m. when your wife or husband has a bad bug and is throwing up and has severe diarrhea and you're wiping his or her bottom, changing their night clothes and hauling the sheets and covers to the washing machine, "Baby Love" somehow does not work for me!
- iv. *"I Wanna Be Your Lover"* by Prince. Something never uttered by a man on Friday nights at a bar near closing time, right?
- v. *"Sexual Healing"* by Marvin Gaye. Ok, this one speaks for itself, but I don't think we want to know what it's saying. Sounds like Marvin might have had a bad case of gonorrhea.
- vi. *"Fly Me to the Moon"* by Bobby Womack. Deacon Henry has explained in his homilies about passages from the New Testament that point us back to the restoration of our original state in the Garden of Paradise, but I guess he left out the part about connecting flights at Cape Canaveral.
- vii. *"Love Train"* by The O'Jays. Not sure what a love train is, but statistics tell us that 50% of the love trains derail somewhere along the tracks.
- viii. *"Let's Get Married"* by Jagged Edge. This seems to be getting us closer to a concept of Catholic marriage, but we are left wondering how, why and what is the point of the whole exercise.
- ix. *"Friday I'm in Love"* by The Cure. Thank God it's Friday, okay, but what about the other days of the week? For my wife and I, we have always called Friday our "Date Night," but I can tell you our marriage and our love goes well beyond Fridays.
- x. *"Bidi Bidi Bom Bom"* by Selena. Finally, this explains everything, right? We had set two hours aside this morning for the Sacrament of Marriage, but this wraps it all up, am I right? Or maybe Selena should stick to posting sob videos on the internet?

II. What are the Statistics on Divorce?

- A. According to the American Psychological Association, approximately 40-50% of first marriages end in divorce. The divorce rate for second marriages is even higher, with approximately 60-67% of second marriages ending in divorce.
- B. According to the Pew Research Center, 34% of Catholic marriages end in divorce.
- C. Clearly, society in general and Catholics in particular are not being properly catechized or we Catholics are subject to the same societal pressures and negative cultural effects.
- D. Divorce has a very negative impact on children with increased likelihood of delinquency, adult crime, illiteracy, truancy, substance abuse, premarital sex, illegitimacy, abortions, divorce, employment, etc. A child only get some childhood. Everything we know about the development f brain architecture and emotional and mental development clearly establishes that trauma and the tearing apart of the family structure severely damages virtually every developmental metric for children.
- E. In 1960, the average age of a woman's first marriage was 20.3 years; that of men was 22.8 years. But by 2010, that changed so that the median age at first marriage was 25.8 years for women and 28.3 years for men (Copen et al. 2012). In 1960, the rate of marriage for women was 76.5 per 10,000, but this had decreased to 37.4 per 10,000 by 2008. The birth rate for the United States is now so low that it is below replacement rate, and 41 percent of all births in 2009 were to unmarried women. Nearly one in five births to women in their thirties was non-marital in 2007, compared with one in seven in 2002.
- F. According to research performed by the National Center for Biotechnology Information, "[n]early three decades of research evaluating the impact of family structure on the health and well-being of children demonstrates that children living with their married, biological parents consistently have better physical, emotional, and academic well-being. Pediatricians and society should promote the family structure that has the best chance of producing healthy children. The best scientific literature to date suggests that, *with the exception of parents faced with unresolvable marital violence*, children fare better when parents work at maintaining the marriage. Consequently, society should make every effort to support healthy marriages and to discourage married couples from divorcing."
- G. When people wonder why the Catholic Church has pre-Cana for men and women contemplating marriage and insists on rigid liturgical, ecclesiastical and moral rules for marriage, it is not only because God mandated certain things but there are tragic societal costs associates with a disruption of the family and at its core what God hath joined together.

III. Love According to Catholic Theologians and Apologists.

- A. Peter Kreeft, born on March 16, 1937, is a professor of philosophy at Boston College and The King's College who converted to Catholicism in college and has authored over eighty

books on Christian philosophy, theology and apologetics. He brings Aristotelian logic to Catholic articles of faith. Here is his analysis of "love":¹

- i. God's Word tells us that "love is the greatest thing there is." (1 Cor 13:13).
- ii. "God is love," (1 John 1:8), not just loving or a lover, though He is that too. That's why He is a Trinity: He is Love; Beloved, and Loving, complete love in three Persons. Love is God's essence, His whole being. Everything in Him is love.
- iii. "Even His justice is love. Paul identifies "the justice of God" in Romans 1:17 with the most apparently unjust event in all history: deicide, or the murder of God, the crucifixion; for that was God's great act of love. On our part, that was the most unjust, evil, and hateful thing we ever did; but on God's part, that was His perfect justice, because it was perfect love, and so good that we call the holiday on which we celebrate this murderous deed Good Friday."
- iv. "One of the most useful books we can read is C. S. Lewis's unpretentious little masterpiece *The Four Loves*. In it, Lewis clearly distinguishes supernatural love, agape (ah-gah-pay), the kind of love Christ is and lived and taught, from the natural loves: storge (natural affection or liking as in the love for our family, claim, neighbors, friends), eros (natural sexual desire), and philia (natural human friendship). All natural loves are good; but supernatural love, the love that God is, agape, is the greatest thing in the world."
- vi. Professor Kreeft suggests we start with the tool of remotion whereby we try to define what something is not. You may recall that we used the this tool of remotion in studying the Trinity as we struggled to comprehend what God is by what qualities He cannot have. So with this mind, Professor Kreeft calls us to look at what love is not:
 - a. "The first and most usual misunderstanding of agape is to confuse it with a feeling. Our feelings are precious, but agape is infinitely more precious, because our feelings are not infinite but agape is. Feelings come from us but agape comes from God as its ultimate source. Feelings also come to us, passively. They are "passions." Agape comes from God and is accepted actively by our free choice. St. Thomas Aquinas defines it as "willing the good of the other" — the simplest definition of love I've ever seen. Agape is an act of the will, not the feelings. That is why we are responsible for it, and commanded to do it, to choose it. We are not responsible for our feelings."
 - b. "This brings us to a second and related misunderstanding. Agape's object is always the concrete individual, not some abstraction called humanity. Love of humanity is easy because humanity does not surprise you with

¹ *What is Love?* Peter Kreeft, Catholic Culture, 2025.
<https://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=9375>.

inconvenient demands. You never find humanity on your doorstep, stinking and begging. Humanity never has the 20 wrong political opinions. Humanity is an idea, not a person. When five men and six women are in a room, there are only 11 people there, not 12. Humanity never occupies a room, only a mind."

- c. "A third misunderstanding about love is to confuse it with kindness, which is only one of its usual attributes. Kindness is the sympathy with and the desire to relieve another's suffering. But love (*agape*) is the willing of another's good. A father can spank his child out of love. And God is a father. It is painfully obvious that God is not mere kindness, for He does not remove all suffering, though He has the power to do so. Indeed, this very fact — that the God who is omnipotent and can at any instant miraculously erase all suffering from this world deliberately chooses not to do so is the commonest argument unbelievers use against Him. The number one argument for atheism stems from the confusion between love and kindness."
- d. "A fourth misunderstanding about love is the idea that you can be in love with love. No, you cannot, any more than you can have faith in faith, or hope in hope, or see sight. Love is an act, a force, or an energy, but persons are more than - that. What we love with *agape* can only be a person, the most real thing there is, because a person is the image of God, who is ultimate reality, and God's name is "I Am" — the name for a person. If anyone says they are in love with love, that love is not *agape* but a feeling."
- e. A fifth misunderstanding about love is the idea that "God is love" is unrelated to dogmatic theology, especially to the doctrine of the Trinity. Everyone can agree that "God is love" it seems, but the Trinity is a tangled dogma for an esoteric elite, isn't it? No. If God is not a Trinity, God is not love. For love requires three things: a lover, a beloved, and a relationship between them. If God were only one person, He could be a lover, but not love itself. The Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father, and the Spirit is the love proceeding from both, from all eternity. If that were not so, then God would need us, would be incomplete without us, without someone to love. Then His creating us would not be wholly unselfish, but selfish, from His own need."

Love is not a feeling. It is not hormonal. It is not sexual desire. It is not a civic or social justice virtue-signaling. It is not being a good neighbor or even liking another person. When Jesus was hanging on the Cross, the more opportune time (Luke 4:13), we can be sure that Satan was telling Him: "Why are you doing this? Come down from the Cross; save yourself. These people don't love you; they don't even like you."

Love is an act of the will whereby we seek the absolute good of another person by making a complete and total gift of ourselves. It is an act in which we say, "I am yours, and you are mine."

Peter Kreeft conveys a sense of what love is in this beautiful conclusion to his article, "*What is Love?*":

"Nothing is ours by nature. Our very existence is sheer gift. Think for a moment about the fact that you were created, made out of nothing. If a sculptor gives a block of marble the gift of a fine shape, the shape is a gift, but the marble's existence is not. That is the marble's own.

But nothing is our own because we were made out of nothing. Our very existence is a gift from God to no one, for we were not there before he created us. There is no receiver of the gift distinct from the gift itself. We are God's gifts. So the saints are right. If I am nothing, nothing that is mine is anything. Nothing is mine by nature.

But one thing is mine by my free choice: the self I giveaway in love. That is the thing even God cannot do for me. It is my choice. Everything I say is mine, is not.

Heaven is for people who will to make a gift of themselves to God of their whole being and through Him for the sake of others. In our modern culture, we cannot believe that anyone would ever wind up in Hell. Pope Francis believes or hopes that Hell is empty. Sadly, Jesus tells us that Hell is well-populated!

We think Hell is for bad people, and so it is, but Hell at its core is for people who resolutely choose through an act of the will not to make a gift of themselves for the sake of the good of another. Paul tells us in Romans 5:7-8 that "Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us."

What do we learn from this analysis? And why are we beginning with love? A children's nurse rhyme answers this question and actually provides some good theology:

Rose and Andy
Sitting in a tree
K-I-S-S-I-N-G!
First comes love
Then comes marriage
Then comes baby
In a baby carriage!

First comes love and then comes marriage. So, let's now look at the sacrament of marriage as love grows for a man and woman.

IV. Canon Law on Marriage Title VIII, Can. 1055 - 1165.

A. Is Marriage A Sacrament?

Answer: Yes. Canon 1055 §1: "The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life and which is ordered by its nature to the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring, has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament between the baptized. By His presence at the Wedding at Cana, Jesus revealed His glory and provided for this sacrament not only to be raised to the dignity of a sacrament but He also points us back to the original state He intended in the Garden of Eden. Catechism §1613: "On the threshold of his public life Jesus performs his first sign - at his mother's request - during a wedding feast. The Church attaches great importance to Jesus' presence at the wedding at Cana. She sees in it the confirmation of the goodness of marriage and the proclamation that thenceforth marriage will be an efficacious sign of Christ's presence."

B. What is the form of this sacrament?

Answer: The form of the Catholic sacrament of marriage is the public consent of the couple to be married. The sacrament is celebrated in a liturgical ceremony in front of a priest and witnesses.

Catechism §§ 1625 - 1628: 1625 The parties to a marriage covenant are a baptized man and woman, free to contract marriage, who freely express their consent; "to be free" means:

- not being under constraint;
- not impeded by any natural or ecclesiastical law.

Catechism §1626 The Church holds the exchange of consent between the spouses to be the indispensable element that "makes the marriage." If consent is lacking there is no marriage.

§1627 The consent consists in a "human act by which the partners mutually give themselves to each other": "I take you to be my wife" - "I take you to be my husband." This consent that binds the spouses to each other finds its fulfillment in the two "becoming one flesh."

§1628 The consent must be an act of the will of each of the contracting parties, free of coercion or grave external fear. No human power can substitute for this consent. If this freedom is lacking the marriage is invalid.

Why Does the Catholic Church insist on Adherence to Ecclesiastical and Liturgical Forms:

Catechism §1631 This is the reason why the Church normally requires that the faithful contract marriage according to the ecclesiastical form. Several reasons converge to explain this requirement:

- Sacramental marriage is a liturgical act. It is therefore appropriate that it should be celebrated in the public liturgy of the Church;

- Marriage introduces one into an ecclesial order, and creates rights and duties in the Church between the spouses and towards their children; - Since marriage is a state of life in the Church, certainty about it is necessary (hence the obligation to have witnesses);

- the public character of the consent protects the "I do" once given and helps the spouses remain faithful to it.

§1632 So that the "I do" of the spouses may be a free and responsible act and so that the marriage covenant may have solid and lasting human and Christian foundations, preparation for marriage is of prime importance. The example and teaching given by parents and families remain the special form of this preparation. The role of pastors and of the Christian community as the "family of God" is indispensable for the transmission of the human and Christian values of marriage and family, and much more so in our era when many young people experience broken homes which no longer sufficiently assure this initiation:

It is imperative to give suitable and timely instruction to young people, above all in the heart of their own families, about the dignity of married love, its role and its exercise, so that, having learned the value of chastity, they will be able at a suitable age to engage in honorable courtship and enter upon a marriage of their own

Canon 1108 §1. Only those marriages are valid which are contracted before the local ordinary, pastor, or a priest or deacon delegated by either of them, who assist, and before two witnesses according to the rules expressed in the following canons and without prejudice to the exceptions mentioned in canons 144, 1112, §1, 1116, and 1127, §§1-2. §2. The person who assists at a marriage is understood to be only that person who is present, asks for the manifestation of the consent of the contracting parties, and receives it in the name of the Church.

C. What is the nature of the public consent of the couple to be married?

Answer: Canon 1057 §1. The **consent** of the parties, legitimately manifested between persons qualified by law, makes marriage; no human power is able to supply this consent. §2. Matrimonial consent is an act of the will by which a man and a woman mutually give and accept each other through an irrevocable covenant in order to establish marriage. [Canon 1101 §1. "The internal consent of the mind of the man and the woman is presumed to conform to the words and signs used in celebrating the marriage." This is why the form matters!]

The following are incapable of contracting marriage because of lack of valid consent:

Canon 1095 The following are incapable of contracting marriage:

1. those who lack the sufficient use of reason;
2. those who suffer from a grave defect of discretion of judgment concerning the essential matrimonial rights and duties mutually to be handed over and accepted;
3. those who are not able to assume the essential obligations of marriage for causes of a psychic nature.

Canon 1096 §1. For matrimonial consent to exist, the contracting parties must be at least not ignorant that marriage is a permanent partnership between a man and a woman ordered to the procreation of offspring by means of some sexual cooperation. §2. *This ignorance is not presumed after puberty.*

Canon 1097 §1. Error concerning the person renders a marriage invalid. §2. Error concerning a quality of the person does not render a marriage invalid even if it is the cause for the contract, unless this quality is directly and principally intended.

Canon 1098 A person contracts invalidly who enters into a marriage deceived by malice, perpetrated to obtain consent, concerning some quality of the other partner which by its very nature can gravely disturb the partnership of conjugal life. [**She told me the rabbit died.**]

Canon 1099 Error concerning the unity or indissolubility or sacramental dignity of marriage does not vitiate matrimonial consent provided that it does not determine the will.

Can. 1100 The knowledge or opinion of the nullity of a marriage does not necessarily exclude matrimonial consent.

D. **What persons are qualified to make a marriage?**

Answer: Canon 1083 §1. A man before he has completed his sixteenth year of age and a woman before she has completed her fourteenth year of age cannot enter into a valid marriage. §2. The conference of bishops is free to establish a higher age for the licit celebration of marriage.

Canon 1059 Even if only one party is Catholic, the marriage of Catholics is governed not only by divine law but also by canon law, without prejudice to the

competence of civil authority concerning the merely civil effects of the same marriage.

Canon 1084 §1. Antecedent and perpetual impotence to have intercourse, whether on the part of the man or the woman, whether absolute or relative, nullifies marriage by its very nature. §2. If the impediment of impotence is doubtful, whether by a doubt about the law or a doubt about a fact, a marriage must not be impeded nor, while the doubt remains, declared null. §3. Sterility neither prohibits nor nullifies marriage, without prejudice to the prescript of canon 1098.

Canon 1085 §1. A person bound by the bond of a prior marriage, even if it was not consummated, invalidly attempts marriage. §2. Even if the prior marriage is invalid or dissolved for any reason, it is not on that account permitted to contract another before the nullity or dissolution of the prior marriage is established legitimately and certainly.

Canon 1086 §1. A marriage between two persons, one of whom was baptized in the Catholic Church or received into it, and **the other of whom is not baptized**, is invalid.

Canon 1090 §1. Anyone who with a view to entering marriage with a certain person has brought about the death of that person's spouse or of one's own spouse invalidly attempts this marriage. **[Henry VIII executing Anne Boleyn.]** §2. Those who have brought about the death of a spouse by mutual physical or moral cooperation also invalidly attempt a marriage together.

Canon 1091 §1. In the direct line of consanguinity marriage is invalid between all ancestors and descendants, both legitimate and natural. §2. In the collateral line marriage is invalid up to and including the fourth degree. [Fourth degree of consanguinity means: parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, great-great-grandparents, spouse, children, siblings, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren, nieces or nephews, grand-nieces or grand-nephews, aunts or uncles, great-aunts or great-uncles, and first cousins by virtue of a blood relationship or marriage.]

Canon 1102 §1. A marriage subject to a condition about the future cannot be contracted validly. **[I only married this person because I thought he or she would be inheriting a big fortune.]**

Canon 1103 A marriage is invalid if entered into because of force or grave fear from without, even if unintentionally inflicted, so that a person is compelled to choose marriage in order to be free from it. **[No shotgun weddings!]**

E. **How Requirements or Conditions Pertain to Mixed Marriages:**

Answer: Canon 1124 Marriage between two baptized persons, one of whom was baptized in the Catholic Church or received into it after baptism, and the other a member of a Church or ecclesial community not in full communion with the Catholic Church, cannot be celebrated without the express permission of the competent authority.

Canon 1125 The local ordinary can grant a permission of this kind if there is a just and reasonable cause. He is not to grant it unless the following conditions have been fulfilled:

1. the Catholic party is to declare that he or she is prepared to remove dangers of defecting from the faith and is to make a sincere promise to do all in his or her power so that all offspring are baptized and brought up in the Catholic Church;
2. the other party is to be informed at an appropriate time about the promises which the Catholic party is to make, in such a way that it is certain that he or she is truly aware of the promise and obligation of the Catholic party;
3. both parties are to be instructed about the purposes and essential properties of marriage which neither of the contracting parties is to exclude.

Canon 1126 It is for the conference of bishops to establish the method in which these declarations and promises, which are always required, must be made and to define the manner in which they are to be established in the external forum and the non-Catholic party informed about them.

Canon 1127 §1. The prescripts of canon 1108 are to be observed for the form to be used in a mixed marriage. Nevertheless, if a Catholic party contracts marriage with a non-Catholic party of an Eastern rite, the canonical form of the celebration must be observed for liceity only; for validity, however, the presence of a sacred minister is required and the other requirements of law are to be observed. §2. If grave difficulties hinder the observance of canonical form, the local ordinary of the Catholic party has the right of dispensing from the form in individual cases, after having consulted the ordinary of the place in which the marriage is celebrated and with some public form of celebration for validity. It is for the conference of bishops to establish norms by which the aforementioned dispensation is to be granted in a uniform manner. §3. It is forbidden to have another religious celebration of the same marriage to give or renew matrimonial consent before or after the canonical celebration according to the norm of §1. Likewise, there is not to be a religious celebration in which the Catholic who is assisting and a non-Catholic minister together, using their own rites, ask for the consent of the parties.

Canon 1128 Local ordinaries and other pastors of souls are to take care that the Catholic spouse and the children born of a mixed marriage do not lack the spiritual help to fulfill their obligations and are to help spouses foster the unity of conjugal and family life.

Canon 1129 The prescripts of canons 1127 and 1128 must be applied also to marriages which the impediment of disparity of cult mentioned in can. 1086, §1 impedes.

F. **Who are the Ministers of the Sacrament of Marriage?**

Answer: Catechism 1623 In the Latin Church, it is ordinarily understood that the spouses, as ministers of Christ's grace, mutually confer upon each other the sacrament of Matrimony by expressing their consent before the Church. In the Eastern liturgies the minister of this sacrament (which is called "Crowning") is the priest or bishop who, after receiving the mutual consent of the spouses, successively crowns the bridegroom and the bride as a sign of the marriage covenant.

G. **What is the matter of this sacrament?**

Answer: One man and one woman.

H. **Where can the sacrament of marriage be solemnized?**

Answer: Canon 1118 §1. A marriage between Catholics or between a Catholic party and a non-Catholic baptized party is to be celebrated in a parish church. It can be celebrated in another church or oratory with the permission of the local ordinary or pastor. §2. The local ordinary can permit a marriage to be celebrated in another suitable place. §3. A marriage between a Catholic party and a non-baptized party can be celebrated in a church or in another suitable place. **[But not the Catholic parish Church**

Canon 1119 Outside the case of necessity, the rites prescribed in the liturgical books approved by the Church or received by legitimate customs are to be observed in the celebration of a marriage.

Canon 1120 The conference of bishops can produce its own rite of marriage, to be reviewed by the Holy See, in keeping with the usages of places and peoples which are adapted to the Christian spirit; nevertheless, the law remains in effect that the person who assists at the marriage is present, asks for the manifestation of consent of the contracting parties, and receives it.

Canon 1121 §1. After a marriage has been celebrated, the pastor of the place of the celebration or the person who takes his place, even if neither assisted at the marriage, is to note as soon as possible in the marriage register the names of the spouses, the person who assisted, and the witnesses, and the place and date of the celebration of the marriage according to the method prescribed by the conference of bishops or the diocesan bishop. §2. Whenever a marriage is contracted according to the norm of canon 1116, a priest or deacon, if he was present at the celebration, or otherwise the witnesses in solidum with the contracting parties are bound to inform as soon as possible the pastor or local ordinary about the marriage entered into. §3. For a marriage contracted with a dispensation from canonical form, the local ordinary who granted the dispensation is to take care that the dispensation and celebration are inscribed in the marriage registers of both the curia and the proper parish of the Catholic party whose pastor conducted the investigation about the free status. The Catholic spouse is bound to notify as soon as possible the same ordinary

and pastor about the marriage celebrated and also to indicate the place of the celebration and the public form observed.

Canon 1122 §1. The contracted marriage is to be noted also in the baptismal registers in which the baptism of the spouses has been recorded. §2. If a spouse did not contract marriage in the parish in which the person was baptized, the pastor of the place of the celebration is to send notice of the marriage which has been entered into as soon as possible to the pastor of the place of the conferral of baptism.

Canon 1123 Whenever a marriage is either convalidated in the external forum, declared null, or legitimately dissolved other than by death, the pastor of the place of the celebration of the marriage must be informed so that a notation is properly made in the marriage and baptismal registers.

I. **What are the properties of marriage?**

Answer: Canon 1056 The essential properties of marriage are unity and indissolubility, which in Christian marriage obtain a special firmness by reason of the sacrament.

J. **What are the goods of marriage?**

Tobit 8:4-9. "When Sarah's parents left the bedroom and closed the door behind them, Tobiah rose from bed and said to his wife, "My sister, come, let us pray and beg our Lord to grant us mercy and protection." She got up, and they started to pray and beg that they might be protected. He began with these words: "Blessed are you, O God of our ancestors; blessed be your name forever and ever! Let the heavens and all your creation bless you forever. You made Adam, and you made his wife Eve to be his helper and support; and from these two the human race has come. You said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; let us make him a helper like himself.' Now, not with lust, but with fidelity I take this kinswoman as my wife. Send down your mercy on me and on her, and grant that we may grow old together. Bless us with children." They said together, "Amen, amen!" Then they went to bed for the night."

Song of Songs 4:12: " A garden enclosed, my sister, my bride, a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed!"

Answer: Catechism §1601: The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the **good of the spouses** and the **procreation and education of offspring**; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament.

Catechism § 1607: "As a break with God, the first sin had for its first consequence the rupture of the original communion between man and woman. Their relations were distorted by mutual recriminations; their mutual attraction, the Creator's own gift, changed into a

relationship of domination and lust; and the beautiful vocation of man and woman to be fruitful, multiply, and subdue the earth was burdened by the pain of childbirth and the toil of work." §1609: "In his mercy God has not forsaken sinful man. the punishments consequent upon sin, "pain in childbearing" and toil "in the sweat of your brow," also embody remedies that limit the damaging effects of sin. After the fall, **marriage helps to overcome self-absorption, egoism, pursuit of one's own pleasure, and to open oneself to the other, to mutual aid and to self-giving.** [Old maids and confirmed bachelors.]

Catechism §1638 "From a valid marriage arises a bond between the spouses which by its very nature is perpetual and exclusive; furthermore, in a Christian marriage the spouses are strengthened and, as it were, consecrated for the duties and the dignity of their state by a special sacrament."

The marriage bond

§1639 The consent by which the spouses mutually give and receive one another is sealed by God himself. From their covenant arises "an institution, confirmed by the divine law, . . . even in the eyes of society." The covenant between the spouses is integrated into God's covenant with man: "Authentic married love is caught up into divine love."

§1640 Thus the marriage bond has been established by God himself in such a way that a marriage concluded and consummated between baptized persons can never be dissolved. This bond, which results from the free human act of the spouses and their consummation of the marriage, is a reality, henceforth irrevocable, and gives rise to a covenant guaranteed by God's fidelity. the Church does not have the power to contravene this disposition of divine wisdom.

The grace of the sacrament of Matrimony

§1641 "By reason of their state in life and of their order, [Christian spouses] have their own special gifts in the People of God." This grace proper to the sacrament of Matrimony is intended to perfect the couple's love and to strengthen their indissoluble unity. By this grace they **help one another to attain holiness in their married life** and in welcoming and educating their children."

§1642 Christ is the source of this grace. "Just as of old God encountered his people with a covenant of love and fidelity, so our Savior, the spouse of the Church, now encounters Christian spouses through the sacrament of Matrimony." Christ dwells with them, gives them the strength to take up their crosses and so follow him, to rise again after they have fallen, to forgive one another, to bear one another's burdens, to "be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ," and to love one another with supernatural, tender, and fruitful love. In the joys of their love and family life he gives them here on earth a foretaste of the wedding feast of the Lamb:

Tertullian (155 - 220 A.D. Priest and Lawyer): "How can I ever express the happiness of a marriage joined by the Church, strengthened by an offering, sealed by a blessing,

announced by angels, and ratified by the Father? . . . How wonderful the bond between two believers, now one in hope, one in desire, one in discipline, one in the same service! They are both children of one Father and servants of the same Master, undivided in spirit and flesh, truly two in one flesh. Where the flesh is one, one also is the spirit."

K. May a Catholic Marriage Be Dissolved:

Answer: No! Canon 1141 A marriage that is *ratum et consummatum* can be dissolved by no human power and by no cause, except death. Matthew 19:4-9 - - "He said in reply, "Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, no human being must separate." They said to him, "Then why did Moses command that the man give the woman a bill of divorce and dismiss [her]?" He said to them, "Because of the hardness of your hearts Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. I say to you, whoever divorces his wife (unless the marriage is unlawful) and marries another commits adultery."

L. Are there any exceptions to the rule that a Catholic Marriage Cannot Be Dissolved?

Answer: Canon 1142 For a just cause, the Roman Pontiff can dissolve a non-consummated marriage between baptized persons or between a baptized party and a non-baptized party at the request of both parties or of one of them, even if the other party is unwilling.

Canon 1143 §1. A marriage entered into by two non-baptized persons is dissolved by means of the Pauline privilege in favor of the faith of the party who has received baptism by the very fact that a new marriage is contracted by the same party, provided that the non-baptized party departs. §2. The non-baptized party is considered to depart if he or she does not wish to cohabit with the baptized party or to cohabit peacefully without affront to the Creator unless the baptized party, after baptism was received, has given the other a just cause for departing.

Can. 1144 §1. For the baptized party to contract a new marriage validly, the non-baptized party must always be interrogated whether:

1. he or she also wishes to receive baptism;
2. he or she at least wishes to cohabit peacefully with the baptized party without affront to the Creator.

§2. This interrogation must be done after baptism. For a grave cause, however, the local ordinary can permit the interrogation to be done before baptism or can even dispense from the interrogation either before or after baptism provided that it is evident at least by a summary and extrajudicial process that it cannot be done or would be useless.

Canon 1145 §1. The interrogation is regularly to be done on the authority of the local ordinary of the converted party. This ordinary must grant the other spouse a period of time to respond if the spouse seeks it, after having been advised, however, that his or her silence will be considered a negative response if the period passes without effect. §2. Even an interrogation made privately by the converted party is valid and indeed licit if the form prescribed above cannot be observed. §3. In either case, the fact that the interrogation was done and its outcome must be established legitimately in the external forum.

Canon 1146 The baptized party has the right to contract a new marriage with a Catholic party:

1. if the other party responded negatively to the interrogation or if the interrogation had been omitted legitimately;
2. if the non-baptized party, already interrogated or not, at first persevered in peaceful cohabitation without affront to the Creator but then departed without a just cause, without prejudice to the prescripts of canon 1144 and 1145.

Canon 1147 For a grave cause, however, the local ordinary can allow a baptized party who uses the pauline privilege to contract marriage with a non-Catholic party, whether baptized or not baptized; the prescripts of the canons about mixed marriages are also to be observed.

Canon 1148 §1. When he receives baptism in the Catholic Church, a non-baptized man who has several non-baptized wives at the same time can retain one of them after the others have been dismissed, if it is hard for him to remain with the first one. The same is valid for a non-baptized woman who has several non-baptized husbands at the same time. §2. In the cases mentioned in §1, marriage must be contracted in legitimate form after baptism has been received, and the prescripts about mixed marriages, if necessary, and other matters required by the law are to be observed. §3. Keeping in mind the moral, social, and economic conditions of places and of persons, the local ordinary is to take care that the needs of the first wife and the others dismissed are sufficiently provided for according to the norms of justice, Christian charity, and natural equity.

Canon 1149 A non-baptized person who, after having received baptism in the Catholic Church, cannot restore cohabitation with a non-baptized spouse by reason of captivity or persecution can contract another marriage even if the other party has received baptism in the meantime, without prejudice to the prescript of canon 1141.

Canon 1150 In a doubtful matter the privilege of faith possesses the favor of the law.

M. May a Man or Woman Married According to the Catholic Church Separate?

Answer: Canon 1151 Spouses have the duty and right to preserve conjugal living unless a legitimate cause excuses them.

Canon 1152 §1. Although it is earnestly recommended that a spouse, moved by Christian charity and concerned for the good of the family, not refuse forgiveness to an adulterous partner and not disrupt conjugal life, nevertheless, if the spouse did not condone the fault of the other expressly or tacitly, the spouse has the right to sever conjugal living unless the spouse consented to the adultery, gave cause for it, or also committed adultery. §2. Tacit condonation exists if the innocent spouse has had marital relations voluntarily with the other spouse after having become certain of the adultery. It is presumed, moreover, if the spouse observed conjugal living for six months and did not make recourse to the ecclesiastical or civil authority. §3. If the innocent spouse has severed conjugal living voluntarily, the spouse is to introduce a cause for separation within six months to the competent ecclesiastical authority which, after having investigated all the circumstances, is to consider carefully whether the innocent spouse can be moved to forgive the fault and not to prolong the separation permanently.

Canon 1153 §1. 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, either by decree of the local ordinary or even on his or her own authority if there is danger in delay. §2. In all cases, when the cause for the separation ceases, conjugal living must be restored unless ecclesiastical authority has established otherwise.

Canon 1154 After the separation of the spouses has taken place, the adequate support and education of the children must always be suitably provided.

Canon 1155 The innocent spouse laudably can readmit the other spouse to conjugal life; in this case the innocent spouse renounces the right to separate.

V. The Eternal Sacrament of Marriage.

1. After Christ returns and he concludes the Final Judgment in all souls, every person will experience an eternal life either in Hell or Heaven. Our discussion will focus on Heaven since we have said that one purpose, if not the sole purpose of the Seven Sacraments is to light our path and guide us to Heaven.
2. With one exception, all of the sacraments of Catholic Church will cease in Heaven except one. There will be no need for the rite of reconciliation in Heaven. There will no longer be Holy Orders as there will be no need for priests, bishops or deacons. In our resurrected, glorified bodies, there will be no need for the anointing of the sick. There will be no rites of Baptism or confirmation. There will be no need for Holy Eucharist, the summit of our faith in this life, because we will be with Him and in Him in Heaven. But the sacrament of marriage will continue, but transformed and deified.
3. Marriage in heaven is not repealed or set aside. It is perfected, made whole and complete in a perfect way by the reality and unity of being in communion with all other beings created in the image and likeness of God in the unity and love and

glory of the Trinity. We do this through the resurrected, glorified and incarnate body, soul, blood and divinity of One Christ loving himself and emptying and giving Himself in love through the Holy Spirit to be filled with love from the Father. In that state we dwell in, marvel at and give God the glory for the Creation He has called into being for us.

4. The Bible begins and ends with a wedding. Throughout the Bible, God refers to Himself as bridegroom and we His people as His bride. In Hosea 2:18, 21-22, God says "On that day—oracle of the LORD, You shall call me "My husband. I will betroth you to me forever: I will betroth you to me with justice and with judgment, with loyalty and with compassion; I will betroth you to me with fidelity, and you shall know the LORD.
5. In Matthew 19, when challenged by the Pharisees on the Law of Moses allowing divorce, Jesus, as the Lawgiver with full, final and perfect authority, tells them that for the hardness of their hearts, Moses allowed divorce, but that it was not so "**in the beginning.**" In his Theology of the Body, Saint John Paul II points us back to the beginning to understand the original state of man; how Adam and Eve fell; how we live in as sinful human beings whose nature has been wounded and subjected to death and concupiscence; but also the destiny of eschatological man at the end. You will recall that from many of Deacon Henry's homilies explicating readings from the Gospel, he takes us back to the Garden of Paradise to understand how in Jesus our original state is restored.
6. So we will follow this hermeneutic tool by looking "in the beginning."
7. There are two stories of Creation. In the first story in Genesis Chapter 1, we learn that man was created on the last day of Creation as the pinnacle of God's work and that all of Creation was called into being for our sakes. We learn two incredible points in the first Chapter of Genesis: (i) we were originally formed in the image and likeness of God Himself and unlike everything else that was called into being by God at a distance as it were saying "let it be," when it came to man, God Himself personally formed us from the clay of the earth and intimately breathed into that clay His spirit of life, and (ii) God gave us only one command or task: "**Be fruitful and multiply.**"
8. In these elements, we are given an insight into the nature of God and the Holy Trinity because man and woman, in His image and likeness, whose core nature is to be "fruitful" reflect and mirror the Trinity in the family.
9. The theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar has written a beautiful work titled, Theology of Fruitfulness, in which he says:

"All beings essentially and increasingly appear as epiphanic: they are all inherently self-showing, self-giving, and self-expressing...

But this aspect of self-openness is also endowed with the miracle of fruitfulness.

God's being in the Trinity is an infinite fecundity that reveals itself externally in creation; whatever is made in his image must, of its very nature, have a share in his fecundity... Since mankind was made male and female and since the first word God spoke to them was 'Be fruitful and multiply,' it cannot be doubted that human beings were created for fecundity."

10. In a sense, the Trinity is a perfect, infinite state in which the Three Persons empty themselves to be filled with the other. God the Father eternally begets the Son through a perfect loving knowing of Himself, and the Father and the Son through a perfect and loving act of the will share that love which is perfect subsisting, eternal being itself, the Person of the Holy Spirit. In the Trinity we have a perfect unitive state of the Lover, the Beloved and the Love they share. Because this is perfect love, in an act of sheer unnecessary goodness, this Trinitarian sharing of perfect love desires to share this love and make it manifest. In a sense the Creation is the Trinity's procreation and as Paul says in Romans 8:22, "We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now."

This is why man in the duality and complementarity of male and female were called in the beginning and must still be faithful to the command "Be fruitful and multiply." Man and woman in marriage joined together as one soul and one body, "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh," must be faithful to their vocation. Therefore, the conjugal act must be unitive and procreative. If the conjugal act is not open to a procreative end, then we literally are acting contrary to our nature. "Be fruitful" is not a task. It is the very essence of our being and who we are. If a man and woman cease to be fruitful, in a very real sense, we cease to "be" human.

11. Christ gave us the rite of marriage in the beginning and at Cana he sanctified and raised marriage to a sacrament and blessed it with an incredible sign to call us back to his command, "Be fruitful," by changing sterile, lifeless water to joyful, life sustaining and nourishing wine. And at the Last Supper in His High Priestly Prayer, Jesus shared with us the form and matter of Rite of Marriage that will be celebrated at the Wedding Supper of the Lamb that is described in the final Chapters of Revelation where the Bible ends where it begins - - with a wedding!

Perhaps the form of this eternal marriage may be found in these words from Jesus' High Priestly Prayer:

"So that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me. And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me." John 17.

- K. And after the Wedding Supper of the Lamb, As Saint Augustine explains in his homily on the first epistle of John: See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed."

We will eternally *Unus Christus Amans Seipsum* (One Christ loving Himself), the perfect, deep, unitive communion with and living at the heart of the Trinity partaking of His divinity. This is not some selfish Christ turned in on Himself. This is Christ, the Head, in deep communion with all the members of His body. This is all the members in Christ experiencing deep mystical communion with Him and one another, all swept up into the life of the Trinity. Again, as St. Paul says, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's. (1 Cor 3:23).