

Marriage

Catholic Truth League- 2/13/2015

Marriage:

What is marriage?

"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."(CCC 1601)

What makes a valid marriage?

The ability to exchange consent freely and unconditionally, the consent to fidelity, indissolubility and openness to children, no impediments to marriage, and following the sacrament properly.

How is Marriage related to the sacrament of matrimony?

Marriage fulfills the sacrament of matrimony, because, in marriage, a man and woman establish a matrimonial covenant. 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."⁸⁴ ¹⁶⁰² Sacred Scripture begins with the creation of man and woman in the image and likeness of God and concludes with a vision of "the wedding-feast of the Lamb."⁸⁵ Scripture speaks throughout of marriage and its "mystery," its institution and the meaning God has given it, its origin and its end, its various realizations throughout the history of salvation, the difficulties arising from sin and its renewal "in the Lord" in the New Covenant of Christ and the Church.⁸⁶ The Sacrament of Matrimony creates a sacramental marriage.

Is it wrong for a man and a woman in a relationship to live together without being married?

The Church does not believe that cohabitation before marriage is a moral or acceptable preparation for this sacred bond. Rather, the church sees cohabitation as a threat to the marital happiness that engaged couples so desperately seek. For example, the insecurity of not being able to live without one another before the marriage manifests itself after the marriage in a lack of trust between the two parties which is essential for a strong marital relationship.

Why is there no divorce in the eyes of God?

Because it is impossible for any human power to break the God-made bond, or sacramental covenant, between husband and wife. As Jesus said, "So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." (Matthew 19:6).

What's the difference between a divorce and an annulment?

A civil divorce basically says that what was once a marriage is no longer a marriage. The marriage took place but ended and a previously married couple no longer has the legal obligations of husband and wife. An annulment, on the other hand, basically says that the Sacrament of Matrimony never took place to begin with. A marriage that was annulled was never valid to begin with.

Why can a marriage covenant only be between a man and a women?/Why did God make it that way?

A marriage covenant can only be between a man and a woman, because its purpose is to preserve the human race by generating and raising children. God made it this way, because two people who are of the same gender would be unable to procreate if they were to marry, so they would be unable to fulfill the purpose of marriage. He made humans in a way which procreation requires two people of different gender.

Where in the Bible does it say that only men and women can marry?

Genesis 1:25–28: "God created man in his own image....male and female he created them... and God said, 'Be fruitful and multiply' " and Genesis 2:24, " a man shall be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh." Jesus himself only talks about marriage in the context men and women. (See Matt. 19:3–8 as an example)

I heard that the Catholic Church used to have a ceremony between two men or two women that mimicked a marriage ceremony, which effectively meant they used to allow gay marriage. Is this true?

This claim has been made in recent years about adelphopoiesis, a practice that existed primarily in the Eastern Orthodox Church until the 18th century, but which did exist in the medieval Eastern Catholic Rites

until the 14th. However, this claim is disputed or denied by most scholars; the accounts of the ceremony all describe it as a form of adoption or spiritual brotherhood, there are no accounts of sexual love being associated with it, and it and marriage were treated separately.

Sexual Morality:

Is non-marital sex always wrong, and if so why?

Yes, non-marital sex is always wrong, because "it is gravely contrary to the dignity of persons and of human sexuality which is naturally ordered to the good of spouses and the generation and education of children.

Moreover, it is a grave scandal when there is corruption of the young." (CCC 2353).

"Recreational or casual sex is morally wrong not only because it trivializes a gift of God but also because it completely separates sex from its proper context, namely, that of love and marriage and uses the other person as a means of sexual gratification." (1) In addition to these, the Catholic Church believes it to be a mortal sin.

Where in the Bible does it condemn nonmarital sex?

Both Jesus and Paul condemn sexual immorality. For example, Jesus says, "For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery...All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person." (Mark 7:21 & 23). In addition, Jesus says, "From the mind stem evil designs – murder, adulterous conduct, fornication, stealing, false witness, blasphemy. These are the things that make a man impure (Matt. 15:19-20)." Paul is even more explicit when he says: "No fornicator, no impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." (Eph 5:5) Paul often links sexual immorality and fornication in his letters.

Are homosexual acts always immoral, and if so why?

"Tradition has always declared that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered."¹⁴² They are contrary to the natural law. They close the sexual act to the gift of life. They do not proceed from a genuine affective and sexual complementarity. Under no circumstances can they be approved." (CCC 2357)

'Secondly, the Church teaches that genital acts between homosexual persons are always objectively morally wrong because they can never fulfill the procreative dimension of sexual union. "It is within a heterosexual marital relationship that genital sexual activity is morally acceptable. Only within marriage does sexual intercourse fully symbolize the Creator's dual design, as an act of covenant love, with the potential of co-creating new human life. Therefore homosexual genital activity is considered immoral" (U.S. Bishops document on *Human Sexuality*, p. 55).' (2)

Where in the Bible does it condemn homosexual acts?

While Jesus did not say anything directly about this subject, that doesn't mean it's not mentioned at all. Both in the Old Testament and the New Testament homosexual acts were condemned. "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination."(Leviticus 18:22). In addition, Paul says, "⁹ Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, ¹⁰ thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God." (Cor 1 6:9-10). These are clear condemnations of homosexual acts.

Selected Bibliography:

(1)<http://www.ascensioncatholic.net/TOPICS/morality/SexualMorality1.html>

(2) <http://www.ascensioncatholic.net/TOPICS/morality/SexualMorality2.html>

<http://www.catholic.com/magazine/articles/did-jesus-allow-divorce>

<http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=397>

<http://newevangelizers.com/blog/2013/08/14/3-catholic-responses-to-john-boswells-same-sex-unions-in-pre-modern-europe/>

<http://blog.adw.org/2014/09/premarital-sex-is-a-mortal-sin-of-this-we-must-be-clear-and-insist-on-repentance-as-they-only-way-to-be-saved/>

http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c3a7.htm

May a couple who marries in the Church, divorce, and later reconcile resume marital relations?

Civil divorce has no effect on the state of the sacramental marriages, so it wouldn't have an effect on whether they should resume marital relations.

<http://www.catholic.com/quickquestions/may-a-couple-who-marry-in-the-church-divorce-and-later-reconcile-resume-marital-relat>

Where does the church stand on incest? Can cousins marry?

It is absolutely prohibited to marry a direct relative (sibling or parent). Marriage to first cousins is proscribed by canon law; it is possible for a dispensation to be issued in this case, but barring very special circumstances, it's probably not a good idea.

<http://www.catholic.com/quickquestions/is-marrying-a-relative-allowed-by-the-church>

Here's canon law (which seems more restrictive than the answer that question gave):

Can. 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.

§3. The impediment of consanguinity is not multiplied.

§4. A marriage is never permitted if doubt exists whether the partners are related by consanguinity in any degree of the direct line or in the second degree of the collateral line.

Can. 1092 Affinity in the direct line in any degree invalidates a marriage.

If a wife has been raped, is the resulting child a bastard?

According to Canon 1137, "The children conceived or born of a valid or putative marriage are legitimate." Legitimacy is a legal, and not a moral, concept (a legitimate child is not better or worse than an illegitimate one), and one that has very little bearing on current canon law (although it did have more in the past).

Should wedding vows be renewed at any time?

Renewing wedding vows is a purely symbolic ceremony; since a valid marriage cannot be invalidated, it never needs to be renewed. That said, renewing vows is generally considered a good thing to do because it reminds you of the importance and special nature of your relationship, and may help you to stay firm or improve in it.

<http://www.catholic.com/quickquestions/should-we-renew-our-wedding-vows>

Are the children of an annulled marriage illegitimate?

The granting of an annulment does nothing to affect the legitimacy of children. That status, to the scant degree it has any canonical significance, is determined prior to the time any questions of annulment are raised (*Annulments and the Catholic Church*, 117–19)

Where does the Church stand on arranged marriage?

This sort of marriage is very likely to be a forced relationship, lacking in complete and full consent of both the man and the woman. Without full, willful, and informed consent, the marriage cannot be valid in the eyes of the Church.

Are there any grounds for which a civil divorce would be okay?

Yes. "A spouse who occasions grave danger of soul or body to the other or to the children, or otherwise makes the common life unduly difficult, provides the other spouse with a reason to leave, either by a decree of the local ordinary [e.g., bishop] or, if there is danger in delay, even on his or her own authority." (Codex Iuris Canonici 1153)

Why is marriage only between a man and women and what led the the Catholic Church to believe that this is true?

Because "Marriage is the natural, indissoluble union, perfected by the Sacrament, between one man and one woman directed towards the purpose of preserving the human race by generating and raising children." It is several verses in the Bible that has lead the Catholic Church to believe this to be true. These include "Genesis 1:25–28: "God created man in his own image....male and female he created them... and God said, 'Be fruitful and multiply' " and Genesis 2:24, " a man shall be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

Can a Catholic and non-Catholic marry?

Yes, however, the Catholic person must fulfill certain requirements in order for the marriage to be recognized. This includes express permission of the local bishop, the Catholic person upholding of the

obligation to preserve his or her own faith and to "ensure the baptism and education of the children in the Catholic Church." (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1635)

Can people marry and not have children?

Yes. "Spouses to whom God has not granted children can nevertheless have a conjugal life full of meaning, in both human and Christian terms. Their marriage can radiate a fruitfulness of charity, of hospitality, and of sacrifice."(CCC 1654)

How many children should Catholics attempt to have?

As many as they would like, as long as they can properly fulfill their responsibilities and support their families.

Can a single Catholic adopt children?

The Church does not have any specific teaching on single persons adopting children. However, the Church does encourage adoption of children.

What is the difference between a natural marriage and a sacramental marriage?

A natural marriage is marriage- a covenant whereby two people exchange themselves to each other- between either two non-baptized people or a baptized person. A sacramental marriage is a marriage that has been raised to a Sacrament and is only between a baptized man and a baptized women.

'The Sacrament of matrimony confers a grace to the natural marriage. This is what its sacramental character signifies. The Council of Trent explained: "The grace that should enhance natural love, consolidate the indissoluble union [of the marriage], and sanctify the spouses was merited by Christ in His Passion, He who is the author and end of the venerable Sacraments" (*Denz.* 971).'

Both are marriages and are holy as God is the author of marriage, but sacramental marriages confers graces that strengthen the marriage.

<http://www.traditioninaction.org/religious/k001rpMarriage1.html>

Why does God say that the marriage-bond should be permanent?

The Bible does not make this clear. However, one possible explanation- especially for sacramental marriages- is that God does not make temporary covenants, and so covenants with his blessing should be permanent. Alternatively, it could be that anything less than a permanent marriage is inherently unhealthy and thus to be avoided. A third possible reason is that the overall good caused by a marriage-bond being permanent might outweigh the costs. Whatever the reason, the Bible clearly supports the position that a marriage-bond should be permanent.

Pope John Paul II said in answer to this kind of question-

"Many replies can be given; among them the very powerful ones are the good of the children and the good of the entire society, but the most fundamental reply comes through *the recognition of the objectivity of being spouses*, seen as a *reciprocal gift*, made possible and guaranteed by God himself. The ultimate reason, therefore, for the duty of faithful love is none other than what is the basis of the divine covenant with the human person: *God is faithful*. To make possible the fidelity of heart to one's spouse, even in the hardest cases, one must have recourse to God in the certainty of receiving assistance. The way of mutual fidelity passes, moreover, through an openness to Christ's charity, which "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (I Cor 13,7). In every marriage the mystery of redemption becomes present, brought about by a real participation in the Cross of the Saviour, accepting the Christian paradox that joins happiness with the bearing of suffering in the spirit of faith."

<http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=4670>