



Your

Catholic Coach

Be transformed! Rom 12:1-2

divorce - quick summary of Church teachings

Most people don't fully understand what the Church really teaches about love, sex, marriage, divorce, annulment, or remarriage. In fact, there are simply too many myths and misunderstandings that can cause frustration, anger, and even lead some to leave the Church.

The "good news" is that anyone can access the truth of Church teachings from reliable sources, such as the Catechism of the Catholic Church (see excerpts below).

Did you know that not all marriages were entered into in a way that is recognized as valid by the Catholic Church, even if the couple married inside a church?

Even if one or both parties intended authentic marriage, maybe one or both was not capable/ free to marry in a way that images the free, permanent, life-giving bond between Christ the Bridegroom and his bride, the Church. After all, the Church always looks to Christ in everything and especially to his words about this important union.

There may have been a wedding, a shared life, good times, and beautiful children--but sometimes (from the beginning) there really wasn't a true "marriage" as the Church understands from Christ. Social, sexual, romantic, legal, financial, and even parental bonds do not equal what is required for a valid marriage bond.

While not a blanket permission to divorce, the Church also knows that sometimes civil divorce is not only tolerated but necessary for very serious reasons, such as the safety or well-being of the family. Sometimes it's clear that, after years of struggle and a final divorce, there never was a free, faithful, total, or fruitful bond that was formed between the couple when they said, "I do".

But sadder still, is when one party gave it his or her very best and intended the union for life, only to be abandoned by the other party. The Church is clear and unyielding in assuming every marriage is valid until proven otherwise; she upholds the dignity, sanctity, and indissolubility of marriage vows. But she also understands that what sometimes looked like a marriage was not.

Each case is different because each person and each marriage is unique. No matter what your situation may be, the Church is here to help investigate, clarify, encourage, and support you and your family in living a holy and happy life. Don't be discouraged--keep learning.

From the CCC - "Divorce"

2382 The Lord Jesus insisted on the original intention of the Creator who willed that marriage be indissoluble. He abrogates the accommodations that had slipped into the old Law. Between the baptized, "a ratified and consummated marriage cannot be dissolved by any human power or for any reason other than death."

2383 The separation of spouses while maintaining the marriage bond can be legitimate in certain cases provided for by canon law. If civil divorce remains the only possible way of ensuring certain legal rights, the care of the children, or the protection of inheritance, it can be tolerated and does not constitute a moral offense.

2384 Divorce is a grave offense against the natural law. It claims to break the contract, to which the spouses freely consented, to live with each other till death. Divorce does injury to the covenant of salvation, of which sacramental marriage is the sign. Contracting a new union, even if it is recognized by civil law, adds to the gravity of the rupture: the remarried spouse is then in a situation of public and permanent adultery:

If a husband, separated from his wife, approaches another woman, he is an adulterer because he makes that woman commit adultery; and the woman who lives with him is an adulteress, because she has drawn another's husband to herself.

2385 Divorce is immoral also because it introduces disorder into the family and into society. This disorder brings grave harm to the deserted spouse, to children traumatized by the separation of their parents and often torn between them, and because of its contagious effect which makes it truly a plague on society.

2386 It can happen that one of the spouses is the innocent victim of a divorce decreed by civil law; this spouse therefore has not contravened the moral law. There is a considerable difference between a spouse who has sincerely tried to be faithful to the sacrament of marriage and is unjustly abandoned, and one who through his own grave fault destroys a canonically valid marriage.

Still have questions or concerns? Think carefully. Get qualified counsel. Read more on this web page.

Do you need help with:

- Processing your emotions?
- Wondering about the future?
- Helping the kids?
- Dealing with an ex?
- Dating right this time?

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