

Matthew 19:1-9

### **Why must marriage be indissoluble?**

**Matthew 19:3-9**, "*from the beginning it was not so.*"

- What was God's original plan for man and woman?
- What was His plan for love, sex and marriage from the beginning?
  - We need to go back to Genesis.

### **Genesis 1:26-28**

- God created Man in his image and likeness specifically as *male* and *female*.
- This means that somehow, in the complementarity of the sexes, we *image* God.
- As male and female, we make *visible* God's *invisible* mystery.

### **What is God's invisible mystery?**

- **1 John 4:8**, "God is love".
- We often think of this in terms of God's love for us.
- **God is love *in himself***, in the relationship of the three Persons of the Trinity.
  - God is All-Good
    - Good is diffusive of itself.
      - The nature of good is to give itself away
- **This is the Law of the Gift**

The Father, from all eternity, is making a gift of himself in love to the Son. The Son, eternally receiving the gift of the Father, makes a gift of himself back to him. The love between them is so real, so profound, that it *is* another eternal person – the Holy Spirit.

### **God is love**

- He is
1. A Free and Total Gift of Self
  2. That forms a Permanent Union
  3. From which New Life springs forth

**God is in himself a Life-giving *Communion of Persons*.**

**The definition of love is based on who God is, He is Love.**

- Not by our sexual orientation

**LOVE IS:**

1. Free and Total Gift of Self
2. Permanent gift of self
3. A gift that is Ordered to new life

**Love between a man and woman is designed to be a reflection of the love of the Trinity.**

When a man and woman say "I love you" they are saying:

1. I want to give a total gift of self (**fidelity**)
2. To form a permanent union (**indissolubility**)
3. That is ordered to new life (**children**)

Another name for this is **marriage**

**At the Altar** bride and groom commit themselves, they give themselves to each other **freely, totally, faithfully, and fruitfully** – until death

Canonical Promises: of *fidelity, indissolubility, and openness to children*).

**Wedding vows:** have you come here freely and without reservation to give yourselves to each other in Marriage? Will you love and honor each other as man and wife for the rest of your lives? Will you accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?

**The wedding vows are designed to be a perfect reflection of God's love** – the love of the Trinity – and when God loves – His love is permanent an indissoluble union.

But once they have given their irrevocable, personal consent to marriage, they have done something that they cannot undo.

- That is why divorce is a very grave sin
- Mortal sin with full knowledge and consent.

## **Irrevocable Personal Consent**

Marriage comes into existence when a man and a woman, forswearing all others, through an act of irrevocable personal consent freely give themselves to one another. At the heart of the act of establishing marriage is a free, self-determining choice on the part of the man and the woman, through which they give themselves a new and lasting identity. This man becomes this woman's husband, and she becomes his wife, and together they become spouses. Prior to this act of irrevocable personal consent, the man and the woman are separate individuals, replaceable and substitutable in each others lives. But, in and through this act, they make each other unique and irreplaceable. The man and the woman are not for each other, replaceable and substitutable individuals, but are rather irreplaceable and non-substitutable persons. The Catechism of the Catholic Church declares that the consent to marriage 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. 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 (1627-1628).

Before a man and woman marry, they have not made each other unique, irreplaceable and non-substitutable in their own lives. Before they get married they may say and feel like they love each other – but they are still free to change their minds and live independently of one another. They have not yet established their uniqueness, their irreplaceability, their non-substitutability. But once they have given their irrevocable, personal consent to marriage, they have done something that they cannot undo. For they have, through their own free and self-determining choices, given to themselves and to one another a new kind of identity, and nothing they subsequently do can change this identity. They simply cannot un-spouse themselves. They cannot make themselves to be ex-husbands and ex-wives any more than I can make myself to be an ex-father to the children whom I have begotten. I may be a bad father, a terrible father, but I am still my children's father. I may be a bad husband, a terrible husband, but I am still my wife's husband, and she my wife. I have made her irreplaceable and non-substitutable in my life and she has made me irreplaceable and non-substitutable in hers. We have freely chosen to unite our lives, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part.

**Genesis 2:23-24** bears witness to this: “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh... For this reason a man shall leave father and mother and cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one.”

**John Paul II states:** “If the man belongs by nature to his father and mother by virtue of procreation, he, on the other hand, “cleaves” by choice to his wife and she to her husband.” *Original Unity of Man and Woman* p. 81-82

It is because Marriage is rooted in the irrevocable choice of the man and the woman to be spouses that our Lord condemned divorce and said that any divorce which might possibly take place had no effect whatever on the bond of marriage itself.

CCC 1639 The marriage bond has been established by God himself... 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.

### **Christian Marriage is a sacrament –**

Sacraments are signs

- That have the God given power
- To effect what they signify.

### **Marriage as a sacrament:**

- 1) Is a *living sign* that manifests to the world the love and permanent union of Christ and His Bride, the Church.
- 2) It effects what it signifies: It gives the grace to the spouses to love one another as Christ loves the Church:
  - Total Unconditional gift of self
  - Permanent Union
  - Always ordered to new life

### **What is an annulment?**

It means one of the things required for a marriage was missing at the time of marriage: psychological wholeness; full understanding of what marriage is; maybe the person was coerced – lacking full freedom; etc...

**However**, 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, *but remarriage is not possible unless an annulment is granted.*

So, even if your spouse becomes the dictator of a small country, abuses you, ect – if all the things required for marriage were there at the time of marriage, you are married and cannot dissolve this union.

### **Matthew 19:13-15**

In a contracepting culture, couples often enter marriage with an approach to children that assumes they are not going to have them unless or until they want them.

God is saying – Let the children come to me and do not hinder them from the kingdom of heaven. If they are never conceived they will never reach heaven.

Instead of avoiding children unless a couple has a good reason not to, the general attitude should be one of receiving children as they come, unless or until a couple had a good reason not to.

### **Rich Young Man**

#### **Matthew 19:16-17**

- He kind of represents all the world has to offer on the natural level
- He is virtuous
- He has the goods, he is rich
- He is not vicious – not mastered by vice
- He is free from sin
- He keeps the commandments – the natural law
- His life looks no different from any good pagan
- He doesn't sin
- He pursues worldly goods
- He is rich and he follows the commandments

Christ demands that he do something radically different from what any worldly person would recommend; Christ demands that he do something that is incomprehensible to those who do not realize that Christ alone satisfies our desires.

Is our faith really making us live lives that are radically different from those around us?

- This means I risk everything for Christ (fortitude)
  - I withstand whatever difficulty that may block me from possessing God.
- I pursue nothing that distracts me from Him (Temperance)
- Will you leave everything and follow me?
- Will you look different?
- Will you be different?

**CCC 226** It means making good use of created things: faith in God, the only One, leads us to use everything that is not God only insofar as it brings us closer to him, and to detach ourselves from it insofar as it turns us away from him:

### **St. Nicholas of Flue**

My Lord and my God, take from me everything that distances me from you.  
My Lord and my God, give me everything that brings me closer to you.  
My Lord and my God, detach me from myself to give my all to you.

**Christians should not look just like any good person out there**

**How then should we look?**

- 1. Detached so as to be free to pursue God 1<sup>st</sup> and foremost**
- 2. Pursue God**
  - a. Daily Deep Prayer**
  - b. Frequent sacraments**
  - c. Does my Catholic faith inform every element of my life –**
    - i. Business**
    - ii. Civil**
    - iii. Voting**
    - iv. Where my money goes**
    - v. The formation I give my children**
    - vi. Are my kids just like everyone else's kids**
    - vii. Does it affect what I allow to come into my home**
      - 1. Movies, videos, books**

**The key is to reprioritize**

- Figure out what is most important

### **God is the Prime Good**

- Then do whatever it takes to possess God

The rich young man knew God was the prime good

- that is why he walked away sad.

He knew God was the highest Good - But he did not live it

- Do we live as though Christ is the Pearl of Great Price?

### **Matthew 13: 44-66**

- God is the Treasure; He is the Pearl of Great Price

### **The Rich Young Man is a coward**

- He knows God is the top good but he is terrified to give up what he is attached to, terrified to risk it all.

**Matthew 20: 20-28** (see Mark 10:35)