

## SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

In our society the smallest fundamental unit is the family and the family has its beginning in marriage. The importance of matrimony in the Christian life is self-evident and the church needs to stress its importance as our culture has become so accepting of cohabitation.

God revealed to man his need for a wife (Gen. 2:18) and a woman's need for a husband (Gen. 3:16). Marriage belongs to the very order of creation. God created woman for man and man for woman at the beginning of time (Gen. 1:26-27).

Marriage is an integral part of our society. In marriage, and in sexual communion in particular, a man and woman enjoy and demonstrate in outward manifestation what is an inward grace. Ordained of God, it is the highest expression of mutual affection and the deepest human communion, so that God Himself has used marriage to express the depths of His own love to us. It is only in the marital relationship that the use of the sexual faculty can be morally good.

The Sacrament of Matrimony is a solemn covenant entered into by one man and one woman in perfect freedom, in which they pledge their love and fidelity, one to the other, in joy and in sorrow, in health and in sickness, in prosperity and in adversity, so long as they both shall live. It is terminable in God's sight only by death, or by gross infidelity, or by separation on the part of an unbelieving spouse (Mt. 5:32; 19:19, Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:15). Such a covenant should be made only between a man and woman of like mind and faith (2 Co 6:14-15).

## DIVORCE, DISSOLUTION, ANNULMENT

**Annulment** is a determination by legitimate ecclesiastical authority that such a marriage never existed due to one or more defects that existed prior to the administration of the Sacrament of Matrimony. This recognizes that this marriage was null.

**Dissolution** of a valid sacramental marriage is the ecclesiastical determination that one or more actions or factors occurred following the marriage ceremony effectively dissolving the marriage bond.

**Divorce** is a dissolution under civil law of the marriage bond.

Often, the issues of dissolution and annulments come up in the context of a person seeking to be remarried in the Church. It must be remembered that the dissolution or annulment of a marriage on the one hand, and the permission to remarry on the other, are two separate issues.

In looking at a dissolution or annulment, the Church is examining whether some condition or action, either before the marriage or after, had the effect of making the marriage null from the start or dissolving it after the action occurred. When a marriage is recognized as being dissolved or null, the effect is for both partners. But this does not mean that both individuals immediately have permission to remarry within the Church.

## **HOW TO REMARRY AFTER DIVORCE?**

In allowing someone to remarry within the Church, the Church is interested in safeguarding the sanctity of the marriage covenant, as well as the protection and safety (physical, spiritual and emotional) of her members. It is for this reason that permission to remarry is granted only to the one who applies to the Diocese through its Matrimonial Commission. This is not to say that both parties cannot apply separately, but each case will be judged on its own merits. A decision of allowing permission to remarry or not will be granted to each applicant individually. In order to receive this permission, the Matrimonial Commission must judge the reasons for which the original marriage was null or dissolved.

In examining these reasons, it also tries to measure which party may have played the significant role in the ultimate breakdown of the marriage. It must be said that the matrimonial commission will not try to lay blame on either party. It will try to determine the existence of repentance for past wrongdoing, a resolution to proceed with new faith in Christ, and a commitment to live in the new marriage as God intends marriage to be.

## **WHO MAY APPLY?**

Any person being a member of the PNCC in good standing for at least six months whose marriage has been declared annulled or dissolved by a civil court of competent jurisdiction may apply to the Bishop of the Diocese in which such a person is a resident for a judgment as to his or her marital status in the eyes of the Church.

An application may be provided by the priest only after the judgment of the civil court has become final. The application to the Matrimonial Commission must be completed properly and signed by the pastor and the applicants. The application and all necessary documents must be sent to the Diocesan Bishop, who will assign the Matrimonial Commission to study it and render their recommendations.

The Bishop and the Matrimonial Commission shall ensure that their judgments are based upon and conform to the doctrine of the Polish National Catholic Church, that marriage is a physical, spiritual and mystical union of a man and woman created by their mutual consent of heart and mind.

But when any of the facts which we call "Impediments to Marriage", are shown to exist or to have existed then it is sent to further investigation.

The final decision will be rendered by the Bishop in writing and shall be made a matter of permanent record in the Office of the Diocesan Bishop.

Any person in whose favor a judgment has been granted under the provisions of these regulations may be married by a priest of this Church, however the new marriage not supposed to be solemnized.