

# THE INDISSOLUBILITY OF MARRIAGE IN THE BIBLE AND TODAY

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Genesis 2:18-25, Psalm 127, Mark 7:24-30  
Scripture quotations are from the RSV unless otherwise noted.

## Tag: Amoris Laetitia

“Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him’ ... So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, ‘This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.’ Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Genesis 2:18, 21-24).

This is the creation of “a helper fit for him” (Genesis 2:18), that is, God’s creation of woman as a helper fit for the man whom God had just created. She was created by God from the man, from his rib, so she comes from him, is of the same flesh and humanity as the man. She is from his own flesh. This explains sexual attraction, why men are attracted to women, and why women are attracted to men. They were originally one flesh that had been separated, and they long to become united as one flesh again. “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).

This is the origin of marriage in God’s original plan, and, as we see here, it is the union of one man and one woman. Why did they unite? They long to unite because they are one flesh, and the woman was taken out of the man. They marry to become one flesh again. So a man leaves his parents and cleaves to his wife and they become once again one flesh in sexual union and marriage.

The other reason given in Genesis for marriage is to reproduce and multiply. “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it’” (Genesis 1:27-28).

So according to the Bible, people marry because of love and mutual attraction and to fulfill God’s commandment to be fruitful and multiply.

This was God's original plan for marriage. How about divorce and remarriage? We see that this occurred in the Old Testament, but Jesus tells us that divorce and remarriage was not God's original plan, but rather came in due to our "hardness of heart" (Mark 10:5), and now Jesus is restoring God's original plan.

Moses allowed divorce and remarriage, Jesus tells the Pharisees, because of the people's hardness of heart. "But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.' '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 then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate" (Mark 10:6-9 NKJV).

Here, then, is Jesus' restored law for marriage for his followers: "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 10:9). Marriage is forever, until death. Divorce and remarriage is not permitted, as Jesus later tells his disciples. "And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. And he said to them, 'Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery'" (Mark 10:10-12).

Hence the Catholic Church teaches, and has always taught, the indissolubility of marriage. Divorce and remarriage is never permitted. If a Catholic divorces and civilly remarries, he commits adultery, a gravely serious, deadly sin that cuts him off from God's grace and life, alienating him from God. If one dies in mortal sin without repenting, he can expect to find himself in hell forever.

But civil remarriage is more serious than other mortal sins, because it makes a public proclamation to everyone that one has chosen to live in sin, as a public sinner, and as long as such a remarried person has no intention of breaking off his sinful adulterous union, he is unrepentant and incapable of receiving forgiveness from God, for to be forgiven by God one must have a firm purpose of amendment.

That is why unrepentant adulterers cannot receive sacramental absolution within the sacrament of reconciliation, for they lack a firm purpose of amendment. Nor may they receive Holy Communion, for no one may receive it in a state of mortal sin, especially not if they are living in open, publicly proclaimed adultery, for they are then public sinners and unworthy to receive Holy Communion and would commit the further sin of sacrilege if they were to receive it in that state. They would defile the body and blood of Christ.

This Catholic teaching is based on St. Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 11:27-29: "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself."

If divorced and civilly remarried Catholics wish to receive the sacrament of reconciliation and the Eucharist, they must separate. If, for the sake of their children, they do not wish to separate, they must stop living as man and wife, and live in complete continence as brother and sister, nor should they receive Holy Communion where their marital condition is known so as not to give scandal, nor should they hold any prominent position in their parish, such as parish council member or lector.

That unrepentant adulterers cannot receive the sacraments is the clear and unambiguous constant teaching and practice of the Catholic Church throughout her history, and it is based on the teaching of Jesus and St. Paul. No human being, no priest, bishop, Cardinal, or Pope has the authority to contradict this teaching of revealed divine law. Certainly an unclear, deliberately ambiguous footnote (note 351) in Pope Francis's exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, on marriage (published on April 8, 2016), does not have the authority to change God's law on marriage as revealed in Scripture and in the constant unambiguous teaching and practice of the Catholic Church. You don't change clear biblical and perennial clear Catholic teaching with an ambiguous footnote that itself is capable of also being interpreted as reaffirming orthodox Catholic teaching and practice.

Nevertheless some bishops, most notably the German bishops, the bishops of Malta, and the bishop of San Diego, California, have interpreted this ambiguous footnote as allowing unrepentant adulterers to receive the sacraments in some cases if they are accompanied by their pastor in a discernment process.

But this is a false use of accompaniment and discernment, which *should* be used to lead people to repent and reform their lives and bring them into accord with divine law so that they can receive God's forgiveness and justification on the basis of Christ's reparation-making death on the cross for our sins. To receive God's forgiveness and justification, we must genuinely repent, that is, have the intention of turning away from our sins and leaving them behind us. Then we must cling with trusting faith to Christ's saving death for our sins to atone for them and reconcile us with God.

Without genuine repentance and a firm purpose of amendment, we cannot be justified and saved. And if we die as unrepentant adulterers, we can expect to find ourselves in hell forever. It is the job and duty of pastors and priests to warn their people of the danger they are in so that they can repent, reform their life, put their faith in Christ, and be saved.

Those bishops who use pastoral accompaniment to allow unrepentant adulterers to commit the further sin of sacrilege in receiving the Eucharist, as the bishops of Malta and the bishop of San Diego are now doing, are really *accompanying their people to hell*. They have made a serious error and are deceiving their people. They are misleading them into grave sin, and, at death, hell forever. This is not pastoral accompaniment. This is *diabolical accompaniment*. These bishops are destroying, not saving, their people. And they are badly mistaken in thinking that an ambiguous

footnote (note 351) in an ambiguous document, *Amoris Laetitia*, justifies them in doing this. It does not!