

The Sacrament of Matrimony

What is the plan of God regarding man and woman?

God who is love and who created man and woman for love has called them to love. By creating man and woman he called them to an intimate communion of life and of love in marriage: “So that they are no longer two, but one flesh” (Matthew 19:6). God said to them in blessing: “Be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:28).



For what ends has God instituted Matrimony?

The marital union of man and woman, which is founded and endowed with its own proper laws by the Creator, is by its very nature ordered to the communion and good of the couple and to the generation and education of children. According to the original divine plan this conjugal union is indissoluble, as Jesus Christ affirmed: “What God has joined together, let no man put asunder” (Mark 10:9).

How does sin threaten marriage?

Because of original sin, which caused a rupture in the God-given communion between man and woman, the union of marriage is very often threatened by discord and infidelity. However, God in his infinite mercy, gives to man and woman the grace to bring the union of their lives into accord with the original plan.

What does the Old Testament teach about marriage?

God helped his people above all through the teaching of the Law and the Prophets to deepen progressively their understanding of the unity and indissolubility of marriage. The nuptial covenant of God with Israel prepared for and prefigured the new covenant established by Jesus Christ the Son of God, with his spouse, the Church.

What new element did Christ give to Matrimony?

Christ not only restored the original order of matrimony but raised it to the dignity of a sacrament, giving spouses a special grace to live out their marriage as a symbol of Christ's

love for his bride the Church: “Husbands, love your wives as Christ loves the Church” (Ephesians 5:25).

How is the sacrament of Matrimony celebrated?

Since Matrimony establishes spouses in a public state of life in the Church, its liturgical celebration is public, taking place in the presence of a priest (or of a witness authorised by the Church) and other witnesses.

What is matrimonial consent?

Matrimonial consent is given when a man and a woman manifest the will to give themselves to each other irrevocably in order to live a covenant of faithful and fruitful love. Since consent constitutes Matrimony, it is indispensable and irreplaceable. For a valid marriage the consent must have as its object true Matrimony, and be a human act which is conscious and free and not determined by duress or coercion.

What is required when one of the spouses is not a Catholic?

A *mixed* marriage (between a Catholic and a baptised non-Catholic) needs the permission of ecclesiastical authority to be performed legitimately. In a case of *disparity of cult* (between a Catholic and a non-baptised person) a dispensation is required for validity (i.e. to produce the effects intended). In both cases, it is essential that the spouses do not exclude the acceptance of the essential ends and properties of marriage. It is also necessary for the Catholic party to accept the obligation, of which the non-Catholic party has been advised, to persevere in the faith and to assure the baptism and Catholic education of their children.

What are the effects of the sacrament of Matrimony?

The sacrament of Matrimony establishes a perpetual and exclusive *bond* between the spouses. God himself seals the consent of the spouses. Therefore, a marriage which is ratified and consummated between baptised persons can never be dissolved. Furthermore, this sacrament bestows upon the spouses the grace necessary to attain holiness in their married life and to accept responsibly the gift of children and provide for their education.

It is essential that every Catholic has access to good Catechesis to be able to deepen their faith. The Diocese of Plymouth recommends the many Catechetical Workshops from 'Franciscan at Home,' for more information on access to these and online or real group sessions contact deborah.vankroonenburg@prcdtr.org.uk

