

# CATHOLIC TEACHING on *Divorce*

**Matthew 19:3-9** "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" [Jesus] answered, "Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one'? So they are no longer two but one. What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder."

## **YOUCAT 263 WHY IS MARRIAGE INDISSOLUBLE?**

Marriage is triply indissoluble: first, because the essence of love is mutual self-giving without reservation; second, because it is an image of God's unconditional faithfulness to his creation; and third, because it represents Christ's devotion to his Church, even unto death on the Cross.

*At a time when 50 percent of marriages in many places end in divorce, every marriage that lasts is a great sign—ultimately a sign for God...Absolute fidelity in marriage is not so much a human achievement as it is a testimony to the faithfulness of God, who is there even when we betray or forget him in so many ways. To be married in the Church means to rely more on God's help than on one's own resources of love.*

## **YOUCAT 269 MAY A HUSBAND AND WIFE WHO ARE ALWAYS FIGHTING GET A DIVORCE?**

The Church has great respect for the ability of a person to keep a promise and to bind himself in lifelong fidelity. She takes people at their word. Every marriage can be endangered by crises. Talking things over together, prayer (together), and often therapeutic counseling as well can open up ways out of the crisis. Above all, remembering that in a sacramental marriage there is always a third party to the bond—Christ—can kindle hope again and again. Someone for whom marriage has become unbearable, however, or who may even be exposed to spiritual or physical violence, may divorce...In these cases, even though the common life is broken off, the marriage remains valid.

Indeed, there are also cases in which the crisis in a marriage ultimately goes back to the fact that one spouse or both was not eligible at the time of the wedding or did not fully consent to the marriage. Then the marriage is invalid in the canonical (legal) sense. In such cases an annulment procedure can be introduced at the diocesan tribunal.

## **YOUCAT 270 WHAT IS THE CHURCH'S STANCE ON PEOPLE WHO ARE DIVORCED AND REMARRIED?**

She accepts them lovingly, following Jesus' example. Anyone who divorces after being married in the Church and then during the lifetime of the spouse enters into a new union obviously contradicts Jesus' clear demand for the indissolubility of marriage. The Church cannot abolish this demand. This retraction of fidelity is contrary to the → Eucharist, in which it is precisely the irrevocable character of God's love that the Church celebrates. That is why someone who lives in such a contradictory situation is not admitted to Holy Communion.