

Husband-and-wife should promote each other's *fulfillment*, by encouraging the other's full human potential. Marriage is a "consortium" a "partnership," not just for life's *duration*, but for its *development*. That is, "the good of the couple" to which both parties should equally contribute.

*(www.together.ie/CatholicMarriage.htm)



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Marriage In the Catholic Church



"TILL DEATH DO US PART"

(that is, "what God has joined together,
man must not separate.")

Catholic Marriage

*Couples electing to be married in the Catholic Church explicitly undertake an extra level of commitment above that undertaken in a civil marriage ceremony. Whereas the civil bond of marriage is legally dissoluble through divorce at the behest of either party, the Catholic sacrament of marriage if validly entered is explicitly indissoluble, that is, exists as a lifelong partnership, entered into as a covenant whose duration is left to divine providence, with the promise “*till death do us part*” and the rule that “*what God has joined together, man must not separate.*” Thus, a decree of nullity is not a divorce; it is a declaration that an invalidating factor prevented the purported marriage from being valid and binding.

In Catholic doctrine, the objective purposes of marriage are spelled out as: “the good of the couple (*bonum coniugi*) and the pro-creation and upbringing of children.” This is found in Canon Law, and in the marriage section in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Couples should prayerfully reflect on this ideal of marriage, to ensure that they enter it with this level of commitment and faith

Definition of Catholic Marriage

The code of Canon Law (1983)

Canon 1055

§1 The marriage covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of their whole life (*consortium totius vitae*) and which of its very nature is ordered to the well-being of the spouses and to the procreation and upbringing of children, has, between the baptized, been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament.

§2 Consequently, a valid marriage contract cannot exist between baptized persons without its being by that very fact a sacrament.

Canon 1056

The essential properties of marriage are unity and indissolubility; in Christian marriage they acquire a distinctive firmness by reason of the sacrament.

Canon 1057

§1 A marriage is brought into being by the lawfully manifested consent of persons who are legally capable. This consent cannot be supplied by any human power.

§2 Matrimonial consent is an act of will by which a man and a woman by an irrevocable covenant mutually give and accept one another for the purpose of establishing a marriage.

Sacrament and Vocation

Marriage is, therefore, a sacrament, blessed by Jesus Christ for the good of his followers, as a vocation to be lived out, with God’s ongoing help. Its ideals are rooted in the Bible, texts from which will be read at the solemnization of a marriage.

The couple unites “till death do us part,” that is, to remain bonded for life, because “what God has joined together, man must not separate.”

They declare themselves willing to pass on the gift of life to the next generation, both physically and spiritually. They make the noble promise to rear whatever family God may assign to them. Therefore, when considering methods of family planning, they should conscientiously opt for family size suited to their capacity as parents.