

*Welcome To*

## **YTU Public Lectures**

SYNOD OF BISHOPS  
PASTORAL CHALLENGES TO  
THE FAMILY IN THE CONTEXT  
OF EVANGELIZATION

## **Two Pastoral Reflections**

Tuesday 11 November 7.30 – 9.00pm

Tuesday 25 November 7.30 – 9.00pm

Philip Malone MSC

Bernard Teo CSsR

SYNOD OF BISHOPS  
PASTORAL CHALLENGES TO  
THE FAMILY IN THE CONTEXT  
OF EVANGELIZATION

There is a crisis in the family that is profound, complex and global.

The Catholic Church also is in deep difficulty, not to say crisis, as it realizes that much of its teaching is neither understood nor accepted

and

that it currently lacks an adequate pastoral response in this whole field.



however  
because  
in this context the issues are so

**COMPLEX**



our  
*focus*  
this evening

is directed towards

**CHALLENGES  
IN PASTORAL CARE:**  
*Divorce and Remarriage*



with an

**E**mphasis

on



reception of Communion by Catholics who have divorced and remarried



# Just a Note

## ***the spirit of this presentation and reflection***

- is not to take sides
- is not to determine who is right – or wrong

things are rarely, if ever, so simple – simplistic

*rather – and following the lead and example of Pope Francis*

- *to make our contribution to the task of the Synod*
- *to consider what is involved and how all of us might move forward together*

*and to do this in a way that is both*

- respectful of the tradition and those who seek to uphold it – even rigourously
- compassionately aware of those who are hurt and feel their choices are neither understood nor treated with pastoral sensitivity

**TRADITION!**

SYNOD OF BISHOPS  
PASTORAL CHALLENGES TO  
THE FAMILY IN THE CONTEXT  
OF EVANGELIZATION

*Pastoral  
Care*



but where  
to



FIRSTLY.



there are some significant situations it is important to clarify:



## Annulments

may a Catholic – in a second marriage - receive Communion  
... after an annulment of the first marriage is granted?

*yes*

an annulment is granted on the presumption there never was a valid Catholic marriage  
... so – in this context - there is no barrier to receiving Communion

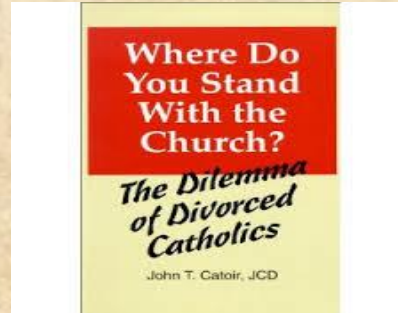
*I believe...*

may a Catholic receive Communion after an annulment of marriage is refused?

*it depends*

if a Catholic believes there never was a valid Catholic marriage  
but is unable to prove this in an annulment proceeding  
... then using what is known as the *internal forum solution*  
a person in this situation may in good conscience receive Communion



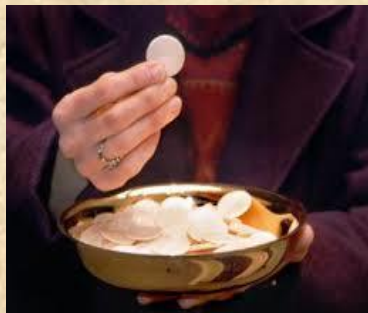


may a Catholic receive Communion after a civil divorce?

yes

contrary to what (unfortunately) many believe or assume,  
divorce does not entail (automatic) excommunication from the Church  
... so a divorced Catholic is not therefore barred from receiving Communion





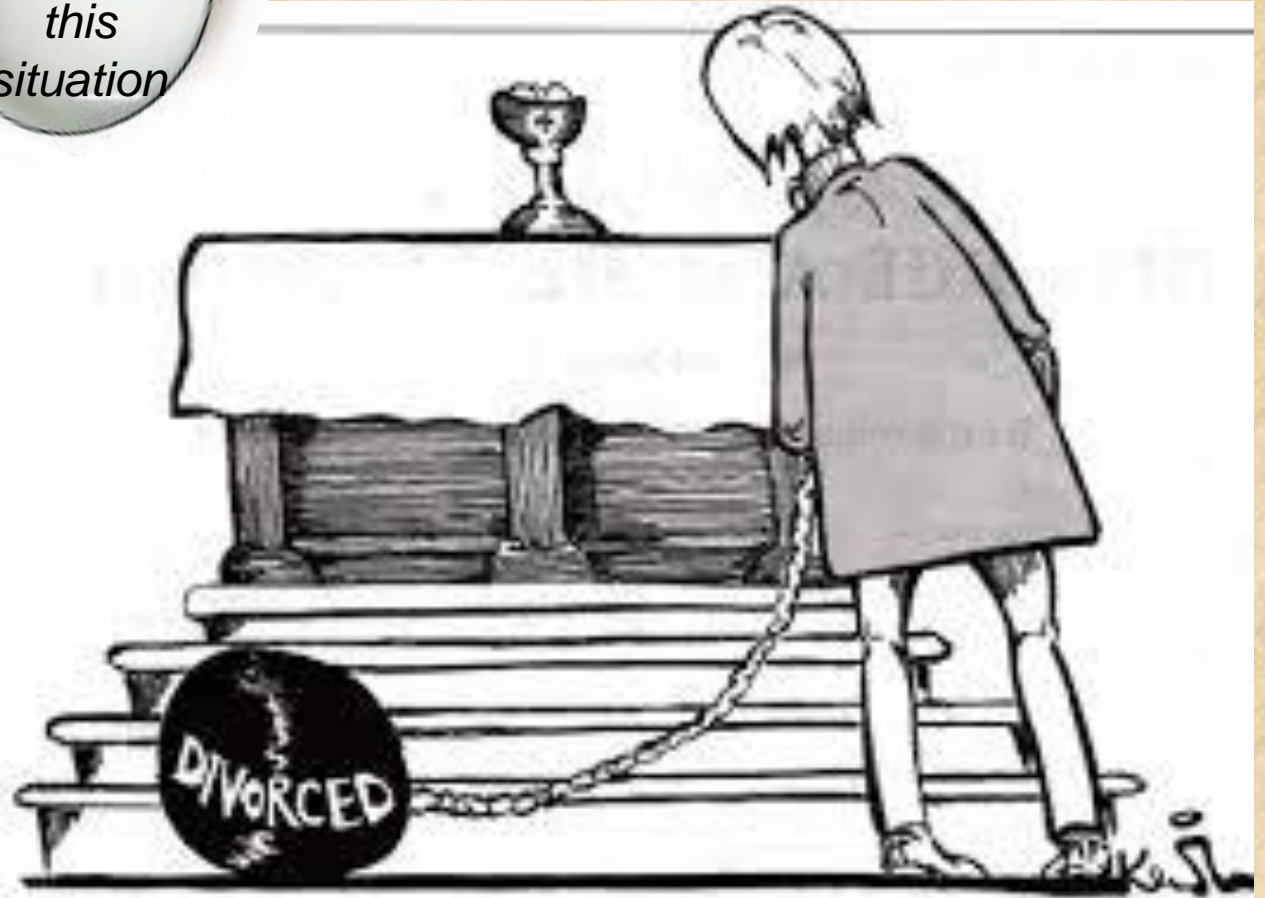
the problem concerning denying Communion or the choice to receive Communion here is  
NOT  
where it is believed there never was a valid Catholic marriage  
NOR  
where there is a valid Catholic marriage that ends in divorce



**RATHER**  
**where there is a public, lawful and valid marriage that ends in divorce**  
**... and a civil marriage follows**



*so let's  
explore  
this  
situation*







## Divorce and Remarriage

the view from above!



and ... another view







***questions to consider***

... depending on one's starting point ...

in fact there is a range of questions to be considered

the questions most commonly asked about divorced and remarried Catholics  
... and whether they are able to receive Communion  
relate to ***what is possible / not possible***

*can the Church Magisterium allow divorced and remarried Catholics to receive?*

... are divorced and remarried Catholics forbidden to receive Communion?

... can divorced and remarried Catholics be refused Communion?

*can divorced and remarried Catholics approach to receive Communion?*

... are divorced and remarried Catholics allowed to receive Communion?

... all valid and important questions





***but the situation is much more complex than that***

in order to better understand / appreciate the responses to the ***what*** questions far more attention needs to be accorded the questions relating to ***why***

***why*** is there (has to be) a prohibition / limits to receiving Communion by Catholics who have divorced and remarried **imposed by Church authority?**

***why*** do **Catholics who have divorced and remarried** believe there should be no barriers to their receiving Communion?

***should*** the **Church Magisterium** allow divorced and remarried Catholics to receive Communion?

***should*** divorced and remarried **Catholics** be free to receive Communion?

... just as valid - and even more important questions





## *Divorce and Remarriage*

so what is at issue here?

*why* is it so important for the **Church Magisterium** to hold so steadfastly to the ban on receiving Communion for those Catholics who have divorced and are civilly remarried?

*why* is it so important for Catholics who have divorced and remarried to want to be able to receive Communion?

*if only there was a simple or straightforward response!*





here we come up against being caught between the proverbial

**Proclamation:** Church Teaching / Law

*... there are those who - for good reasons -  
insist there can be no change, no watering down of this*



**Pastoral response**

*... there are those who - for good reasons –  
insist there must be change*

here we come up against being caught between the proverbial

***choice of personal conscience***



***community expectation***

here we come up against being caught between the proverbial

***in principle***

*... one size fits all people and all situations*



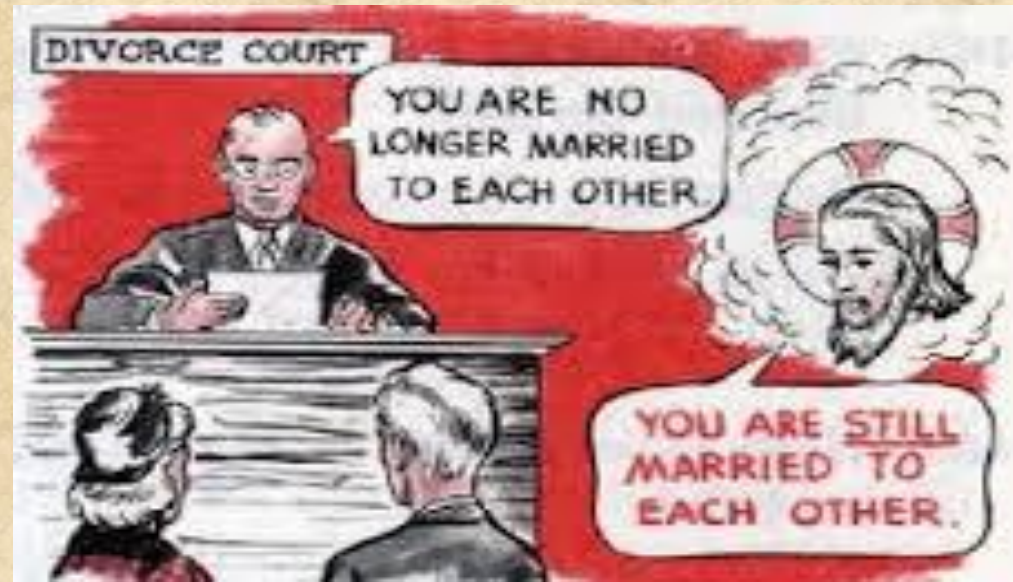
***in practice***

*... where the rubber hits reality!*





in this context  
... let's look at two situations by way of comparison





## the situation *in principle*

Russia is a member of the G20 group of Nations and Vladimir Putin, as President of Russia, is entitled to attend and participate in the gathering

*however because of the*



in the eyes of the host nation, Australia, Mr Putin has violated not only the spirit but also the letter of the law of membership of the group

he has been challenged over this but believes he has no reason to express or demonstrate either remorse or repentance  
*and what is more*

intends to continue behaving in the same way

Australia sincerely hopes Mr Putin will either change his approach  
*or*  
decide not to participate

consider  
this



*the situation 'in practice' – being realistic*

**if he does decide to come and participate fully  
- without a 'change of heart' ...**

this will raise some significant – awkward – questions

***should Mr Putin choose to come under these circumstances***

- *can he be told he is not welcome?*
- *is he to be refused admittance to the gathering altogether?*
- *is he to be allowed to attend but not to participate in proceedings?*
- *is he to be accepted as a full participant at the gathering?*





*the situation 'in practice' – being realistic*

**but if he does decide to come and participate fully  
- with a 'change of heart' ...**

***should Mr Putin choose to come with his 'change of heart'***

*while it is still believed he is, at least partly, to blame for the tragedy  
... and that there will not be – cannot be – a formal reconciliation with the group  
it is also understood that, realistically, he cannot 'undo' the situation  
and there is an acceptance by the group – with regret - of the need to move on  
... all things considered*

- *so he will be welcomed as a member of the group*
- *so he will be entitled to participate fully in all proceedings*
- *so he will continue as a member and participant of the G20 group in the future*





## the situation *in principle*

Alfons and Annabelle are baptised members of the Catholic Church and are therefore entitled to attend and participate in Church Services

(cf John Paul II, Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* n. 94), 22 November 1981)

*however* because of



in the eyes of Church Authority, Alfons and Annabelle have violated not only the spirit but also the letter of the law of membership of the group

they have been challenged over this but believe they have no reason to express or demonstrate either remorse or repentance

*and what is more*

intend to continue behaving in the same way

Church Authority sincerely hopes they will either change their approach

*or*

decide not to participate in Church Services

and now

consider  
this



*the situation 'in practice' – being realistic*



**if Alfons and Annabelle do decide to come and participate fully in the Mass without 'a change of heart' ...**  
**' this will raise some significant – awkward – questions**

***should Alfons and Annabelle choose to come to Mass***

- *can Alfons and Annabelle be told they are not welcome?*
- *are they to be refused admittance altogether?*
- *are they to be allowed to attend but not to participate fully?*
- *are they to be accepted as full participants?*





***the situation 'in practice' – being realistic***

**but what if they decide to come and participate fully  
- with a 'change of heart' ...**

*should Alfons and Annabelle choose to come with their 'change of heart'*

*while it is still believed they are, at least partly, to blame for the remarriage  
... and that there will not be – cannot be – a formal reconciliation with the group  
it is also understood that, realistically, they cannot 'undo' the situation  
and there is an acceptance by the group – with regret - of the need to move on  
... all things considered*

- *so they will be welcomed as members of the Catholic Community*
- *so they will be welcomed as members able to fully participate (Communion)*
- *so they will continue as members of the Catholic Community and communicants*

*... one might think so*



## IN FACT - NO

unlike the *Putin* situation where a practical resolution was possible between 'in principle' and 'in practice'

**if Alfons and Annabelle do choose to come and participate fully in the Mass  
... even with 'a change of heart'**

*that is*

*... acknowledging their responsibility (blame) for the divorce and remarriage*

*nevertheless*

*Church authority will not – believes it cannot -  
accept their sincere belief that, realistically, they cannot 'undo' the situation  
acknowledge the possibility they might move on, even with regret - all things considered*

*.. so there will not be – cannot be – a formal reconciliation with the group*

*and while they are not officially excluded from Church services altogether  
they are not to be allowed to participate fully at Mass by receiving Communion*



# The Issue

***as the Church Magisterium sees it***



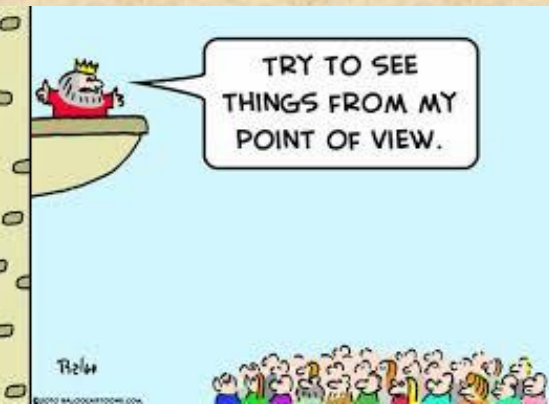
**The Issue**

***as the Church Magisterium sees it***

it is imperative for **Church Authority**

to hold steadfastly to the ban on receiving Communion

for those Catholics who have divorced and remarried

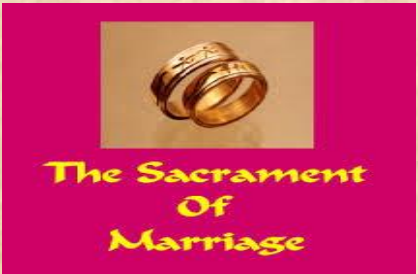




# Divorce and Remarriage



in fact  
this entails  
a complex of issues  
with multiple interlocking layers





THE *Backgrounds*

a complex of issues  
with multiple interlocking layers



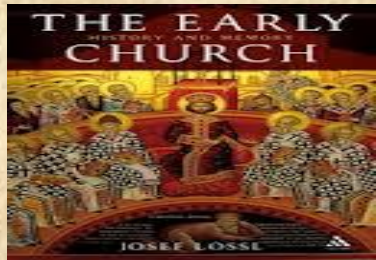


from Scripture:



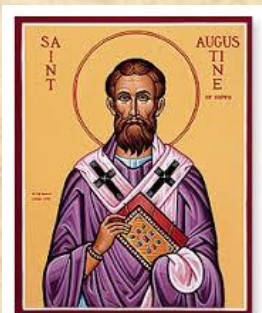
**indissolubility** of marriage (between a male and a female)  
**sacramentality** of marriage (between a male and a female)

from the early Church:



**adultery** one of the sins requiring public penance for reconciliation  
**virginity** became the 'new martyrdom'; a 'higher state' than marriage

from Augustine:



**marriage treated with suspicion:** marriage is not a sacrament  
**'concupiscence'** as pervasive and corrupting of fallen human nature  
**'sinfulness' of sex even in marriage**  
**'ends' of marriage** 1. the procreation / nurture of their children;  
2. the mutual love and support of the spouses





from the Middle Ages:

1184 (Council of Verona) marriage is (finally) officially accepted as a Sacrament

1234 (Decretals) ... Compromising ... Clarifying ... Codifying Law (on Marriage)

**sealing a marriage contract:** the need to publicly validate / legalise marriage  
.. . (dowry / inheritance / verification issues)

**sealing a marriage alliance:** not of 'a couple' but of families / royal houses / states  
(... *elements of this pertain to many cultures today*)

**verified because ratum et consummatum:** *consent and conjugal*  
establishes / guarantees the marriage bond is absolutely indissoluble  
establishes / guarantees the marriage is truly a sacrament

The  
Middle  
Ages



from the Middle Ages:

1184 (Council of Verona) marriage is (finally) officially accepted as a Sacrament

1234 (Decretals) ... Compromising ... Clarifying ... Codifying Law (on Marriage)

**verified because ratum et consummatum**: consent and conjugal

this establishes / guarantees the marriage bond is absolutely indissoluble

this establishes / guarantees the marriage is truly a sacrament

**linking theology with law: the spirit & the letter (cf also matter & form of Sacraments)**  
for Catholics all such marriages are **therefore sacraments & therefore indissoluble**

*... this is taught not simply as an ideal to be aimed at over time*

*... but as a command from God that once verified in legal terms is a fact*

*this was God's plan for the (continuance of) the human race  
the family was the 'heart of Christian Society'*

*this was taken very seriously ... cf Henry V111 of England and Catherine of Aragon*

*this was not without exception ... cf Petrine & Pauline Privilege ... the New World  
but that's another story!*





From the Napoleonic Settlement: 1814-1815 (Congress of Vienna)

the Church reclaimed (and retains) 'control' over marriage  
... Catholics must marry in a religious ceremony as well as 'marry' in a civil ceremony  
... only the religious ceremony is recognised by the Church as establishing a marriage  
- let alone a marriage that is a sacrament

*this was a return to the 'Ancien Regime' – pre French Revolution*

*... a restoration of the 'proper order' in Church-State relations*

*... a challenge to Protestants ... their rejection of marriage as a sacrament*

*.. .a challenge to The Enlightenment ... its espousal of the humanist understanding of marriage as a wholly natural and social 'institution'*



What The  
Roman Catholic Church  
**REALLY**  
Teaches





**the imperative is for the Church Magisterium to uphold Divine Teaching and Law**

**not merely as an ideal but as 'commanded by God'**

**... the Church has no power to change / 'interfere with' God's Teachings / Laws**

**indissolubility:** marriage is a sacred bond (between a male and a female)  
*'what God has joined, no human power can separate'*

**sacramentality:** of marriage (between a male and a female)

*... the marriage union / bond represents (reflects) the*

personal,

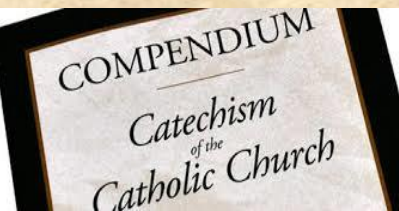
loving and mutual union between the Persons of the Trinity;

*... the marriage union / bond represents (reflects) the*

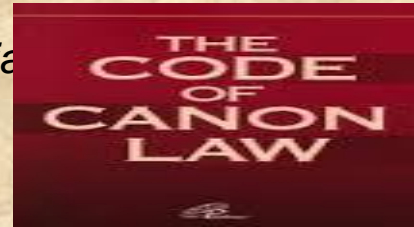
personal,

loving and mutual union between Christ and the Church

**adultery:** : the marriage bond and relationship is special – to be safeguarded



Deuteronomy, Hosea, Ephesians, 1 John, Paul, Ephesians



Therefore . . .





**... because**

the imperative is for the Church to uphold Divine and Church Teaching / Law  
... not merely as an ideal but for us to live as 'commanded by God'

**... because**

the Church has no power to change / 'interfere with' God's Teachings / Laws  
... relating to indissolubility ... sacraments ... adultery

**... because**

receiving Communion is considered / perceived to be *the sign* of full union  
... with the Catholic Community

**... because**

*there is a danger of 'scandal' or 'indifferentism*





**.. and above all *because***

**divorced and remarried Catholics '*persist obdurately*' in  
'living in a manifest state of sin'**

(their choice and lifestyle contradicts completely and continually God's Teaching and Law  
(as proclaimed authentically and authoritatively by the Church Magisterium))

# *Divorce and Remarriage*

*then the*



*for the Church Magisterium*

***the Church Magisterium therefore***

**is obliged to ban – refuse – deny – Communion  
to those whose choices and lifestyle are in public violation of these teachings/laws  
and  
who publicly and ‘*obstinately persist*’ in maintaining this stance  
- for whatever reason (no matter how well intentioned)**

***the Church Magisterium therefore***

**can never allow Catholics who have divorced and remarried to receive Communion**

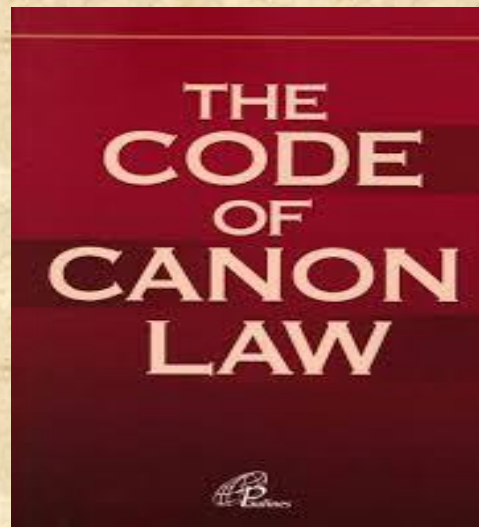




***the prohibition / ban is legislated by the Church Magisterium in this way***

***Code of Canon Law # 915***

**‘Those who have been ... and others obstinately persevering in manifest grave sin are not to be admitted to holy communion.’**



Next

## The Issue

**as Catholics who have divorced and remarried and wish to receive Communion  
– and others –  
see it**



***Catholics in a situation of divorce and remarriage - and others - wonder***

why it is so important for the **Church Magisterium**

to hold so steadfastly to the ban on receiving Communion

for those Catholics who have divorced and are civilly remarried

**My Faith  
&**

**Freedom of Conscience**

**DOING  
GOD'S  
WILL**





***Catholics in a situation of divorce and remarriage - and others - believe***

Catholics who have divorced and are civilly remarried should not be banned – barred – forbidden – denied Communion when they see themselves as having done nothing wrong ... *or if so, have repented*

*because*

... they are doing the best they can in a difficult – if not an impossible – situation particularly when *the expectation – demands – made of them*

... *to separate from the current spouse*

... *to return to the first marriage*

... *'to live as brother & sister' should they choose to remain together are deemed to be unreasonable and unrealistic*

*because*

... they feel the need for the nourishment of Sacramental Communion

.. they feel the need for acceptance (communal) of the Church Community



THE *Backgrounds*

a complex of issues  
with multiple interlocking layers



**for Catholics in a situation of divorce and remarriage – and for others**

***the concern is not***

with the 'in principle' stand taken by the Church Magisterium

**the concern is not**

the right / responsibility of the Church Magisterium to proclaim ideals in this area

**the concern is not**

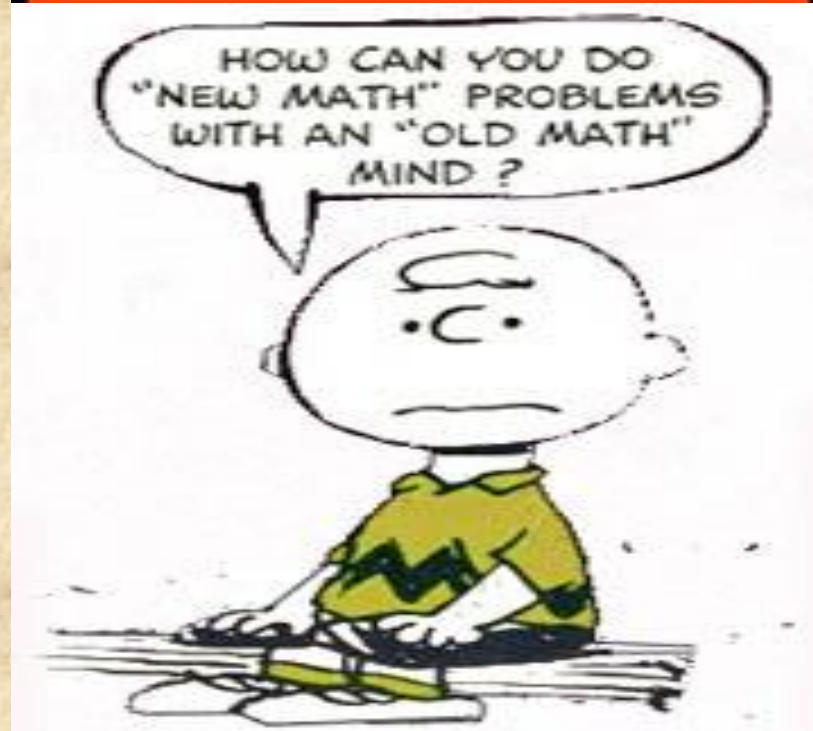
with the need to proclaim, support and defend marriage, family, relationships  
with insights or ideals relating to sacrament, indissolubility and adultery



## *Divorce and Remarriage*

**for Catholics in a situation of divorce and remarriage – and for others**

Here is the  
problem...





**for Catholics in a situation of divorce and remarriage – and for others**

**the concern is**

*how the message is proclaimed by the Church Magisterium*

*... that the proclamation is not by any means 'Good News'*

*the voice is the voice of Jesus ... but the hand is the hand of Church authority*

**the concern is**

changing circumstances of marriage, family life, relationships in the (Western) Church

*religious – historical – social – cultural – psychological – economic*

are not take into consideration

**the concern is**

*that the Church Magisterium seems* in its defence of marriage teaching and law

more concerned with the upholding of authority than with the needs of people

more concerned with preserving an ideal of marriage than everyday experience

more concerned with upholding / maintaining the letter of the Law than the spirit

more concerned with fulfilling the terms of definitions than with relationships

more concerned with content than context

more concerned with obedience to authority than primacy / freedom of conscience

*... and indeed many other comparable variations and expressions of these concerns*



**for Catholics in a situation of divorce and remarriage – and for others**

**the concern is**

that Scripture is being (mis-)used by taking selected quotations out of context to serve as 'proof texts' which (appear to) support (enforce) legal and theological arguments ... rather than searching for the full meaning of the message in the context of the time - and for today

**the concern is**

what Mavis and Ron Pirola, in their address to the Synod, called attention to:

... the fact that church documents on family doctrines are written with difficult language seemingly "from another planet" and "not terribly relevant" to people's real life experience. ... "We need new ways and relatable language to touch peoples' hearts," they said





## *Divorce and Remarriage*

**for Catholics in a situation of divorce and remarriage – and for others**



**for Catholics in a situation of divorce and remarriage – and for others**

while it may not be a solution

a shift in emphasis in tone from a presumption of sin and guilt ...  
a shift from the language of impossible, forbidden, exclusion, 'Team Catholic'  
a shift from the language of obedience and conformity to teaching and law

and

a shift in emphasis to a tone of presumption of good will  
a shift to a language of possibility, inclusion, 'Team Jesus'  
a shift to the language of dialogue  
... with reference to *table fellowship ... relationships ...* and more



might be helpful for a start



*Divorce and Remarriage*



***as Catholics in a situation of divorce and remarriage – and for others***

**WE BETTER GET  
OUR ACT  
TOGETHER.**

QUOTEHD.COM

James Watkins

***as the Church Magisterium***





which, of course, is why the Synod was called

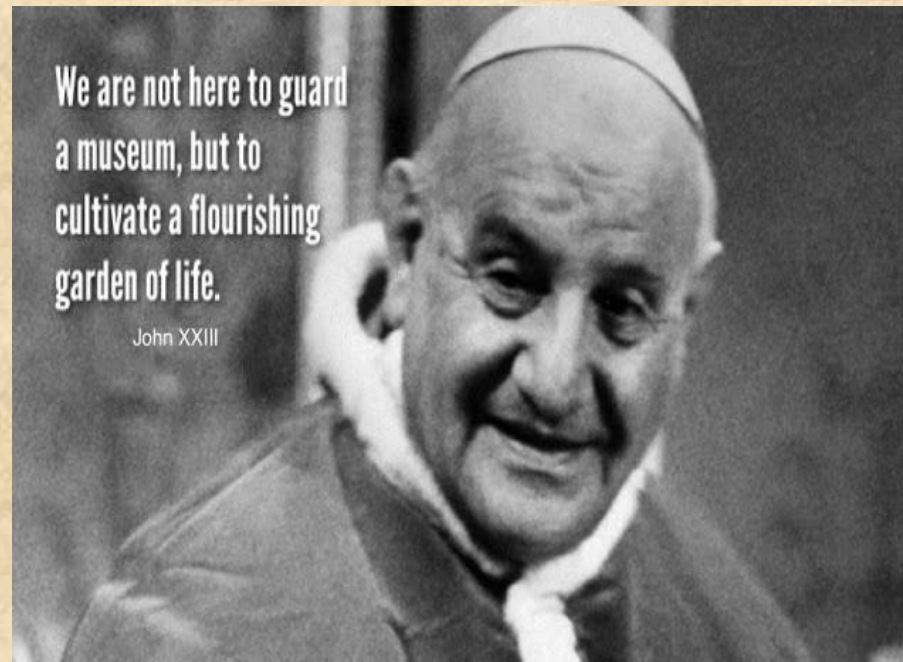
SYNOD OF BISHOPS

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PASTORAL CHALLENGES TO  
THE FAMILY IN THE CONTEXT  
OF EVANGELIZATION

1962-1965  
... and beyond

reviewing – renewing - the tradition in the light of Vatican Council 11



VATICAN II,  
50 YEARS ON:  
THE NEW  
EVANGELIZATION

**SIGNS** OF THE  
**TIMES**  
www.signweb.com



2014-2015  
... and beyond



SYNOD OF BISHOPS

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PASTORAL CHALLENGES TO  
THE FAMILY IN THE CONTEXT  
OF EVANGELIZATION



SO

there is a need for some really good

Dialogue



*polemic?*

'each side' adopts an 'entrenched' position, an assumption that it is right;  
the aim is to denigrate aggressively and assertively not only the stance  
taken by the other side but also its supporters

*argument?*

'each side' adopts an 'entrenched' position, an assumption that it is right';  
*the aim* is to get the better of an *opponent*

*negotiation?*

'each side' adopts an 'entrenched' position ... with an assumption that it is right';  
*the aim* is to come to a consensus by seeing what might be agreed to – salvaged –  
by each side from their already stated stance  
... without losing – sacrificing - any 'non-negotiables'



## *dialogue*

'each side; starts with a particular position

... with the assumption 'each side' is looking for the best outcome for everyone

*the aim* is to explore each position, trying to see things from the other's perspective

to reflect together on the why's and wherefores of the position taken

to assess points of agreement

to assess points of disagreement

in such a way that there is always the possibility of moving forward together



**My father  
used to say,  
'Don't Raise  
your voice.  
Improve your  
argument'**

~Archbishop Desmond Tutu

and my father used to say  
*you never really know how the other half lives  
- until you become one of the other half'!*



AND  
ALSO

SYNOD OF BISHOPS  
PASTORAL CHALLENGES TO  
THE FAMILY IN THE CONTEXT  
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there is a need for some really good

*Catechesis*

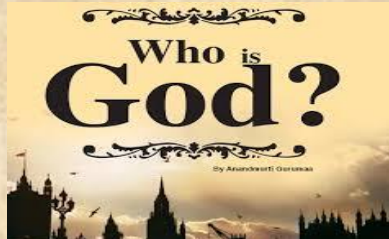
however this must be offered not as



but rather as a







not simply

WHO IS YOUR **GOD?**

but

Who Is God To **YOU?**

I  
Believe  
in God

a God I (must) believe in?  
*or*  
a God who believes in me

*Living In Right  
Relationship  
With God*

Ephesians 2:1-10  
Romans 3:20

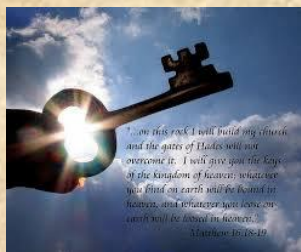
the God I believe in ... is the God I respond to

**GOD'S STORY,  
OUR STORY,  
MY STORY.**

**USER FRIENDLY**

*Catechesis*

and how they come together



THE  
GOSPEL OF  
JESUS CHRIST

**"Who do you  
say I am?"**  
- Jesus



"Are you saying this on your own initiative, or did others tell you about Me?"

*Personal*


**RELEVANT**

SYNOD OF BISHOPS  
PASTORAL CHALLENGES TO  
THE FAMILY IN THE CONTEXT  
OF EVANGELIZATION

**USER FRIENDLY** *Catechesis*



Sacramental  
PREPARATION



**The Sacrament  
Of  
Marriage**

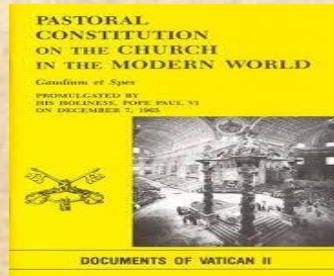


**COVENANT  
MARRIAGE**

*Lifetime*<sup>™</sup>

*Life-Giving  
Relationships*





*relating to the value and sanctity of marriage*

by reflecting on

the insights and perspectives of Vatican Council 11 relating to Marriage

... signs of the times

... covenant process of ideals to be aimed for: mutual love, support, responsibility

*cf Letter to the Ephesians*

... personal choice to marry for love not at the behest of family, business, honour ...

... *ends of marriage* no longer 'prioritised' as primary and secondary

... *ends of marriage* no longer legal 'debts / duties' to be demanded, owed, fulfilled

... *ends of marriage* a commitment which is life-giving for spouses and children

... sacramentality of marriage for the couple and society

a sign of grace / experience of grace / a witness to grace



*relating to the value and sanctity of marriage*

by reflecting on

whether the 'point' of mandating 'a Catholic wedding / marriage'  
is to uphold 'traditional (Catholic) marriage':

- the 'institution' of marriage as prescribed by Church Teaching / Law:  
with verification of the marriage as 'a sacrament' and 'indissoluble' from the start  
because it fulfills the necessary (canonical / legal / validity) requirements  
as 'handed down by God' and as demanded / identified / verified by Church Law  
and as witnessed by the Church (Priest / Deacon) and the Community

or

whether having 'a Church wedding' is a recognition  
that the couple are about to embark on a special journey together  
that this journey is special not only for the couple  
but is blessed officially by the Church (Priest / Deacon)

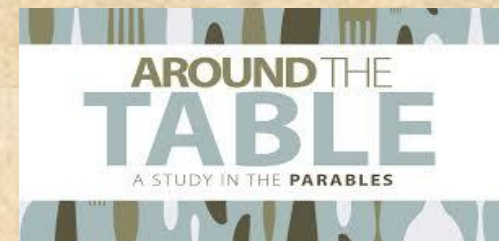
and supported by family, friends and the Catholic community  
that this journey – it is hoped – will in time become truly *sacramental*  
with verification of this found in the quality of a life-giving loving relationship



Communion



# Sacramental PREPARATION







*relating to the value and sanctity of marriage*

by reflecting on

our understanding of Eucharist as **sacrament**

– and the part '*receiving Communion*' plays in this

a model of Eucharistic celebration for the inner circle!

by invitation only and 'wedding garments' as the appropriate dress code

with strict conditions to be fulfilled before receiving Communion

- ... whether *receiving Communion is perceived* as the purpose of 'going to Mass'
- ... whether *receiving Communion is perceived* as only for the 'law abiding'
- ... whether *receiving Communion is perceived* as a *sign* of respect for the teaching of the Church and Law of the Church relating to marriage
- ... whether *receiving Communion is perceived* as the right of the Church to decide who can receive and who will be refused
- ... whether *receiving Communion is perceived* as a 'reward' for good behavior
- ... whether *refusal of Communion is perceived* as 'punishment' for poor behaviour



*relating to the value and sanctity of marriage*

by reflecting on

our understanding of Eucharist as **sacramental**

– and the part ‘*receiving Communion*’ plays in this

a model of Eucharistic celebration’ for a pilgrim people on a journey

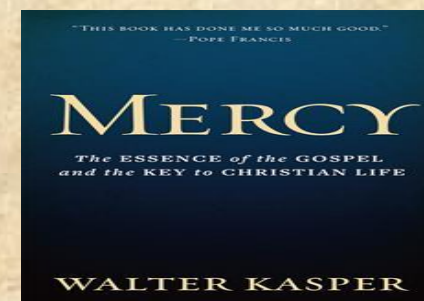
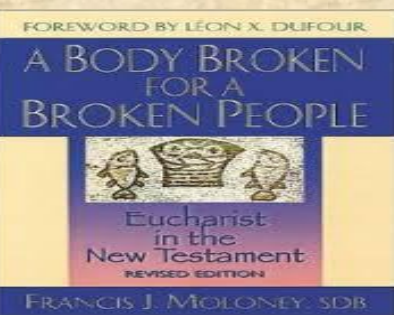
for people in need of nourishment and community support for the journey

*especially those out on the highways and byways*

for people who understand and acknowledge their need

... whether *receiving Communion is perceived as a sacramental encounter with Jesus not unlike that of so many Jesus welcomed to table fellowship even Judas was allowed to stay for the Last Supper!*

... whether *receiving Communion is perceived as a gracious, generous gift of Jesus which implies no strings attached – no quid pro quo though at the same time challenged to live in light of, by values, ideals of Jesus*





*relating to the commitment of the spouses to the marriage – sacramental - covenant*

by reflecting on

how the whole Law can be summed up in our love for God and neighbour  
how love is the greatest commandment and the fundamental criterion for discipleship

by reflecting on

the *meaning* rather than the 'nature' of sin  
– the weakening / loosening / breaking our relationship with God,  
our sisters & brothers, our community

by reflecting on

how the technicality of 'living in sin' – *as it is called*  
– does not therefore involve living sinfully (*Kevin Kelly*)

by reflecting on

what is called 'the theology of imperfect response' (*Herman Boelaars CSsR*)  
.. 'we are not asked by God to do the best possible – but the best we can'

or as *Andrew Greeley* put it: 'God is not a moral theologian – (canon lawyer)  
... for which we all may be duly grateful!'



*relating to the commitment of the spouses to the marriage – sacramental - covenant*

by reflecting on

## **Personal** *Choice*

it is important to recognize the proper role of authority and the wisdom of law in society ... but there is also the need to appreciate the uniqueness of each situation, and allow for the freedom and responsibility of the individual decision maker

the need for people to be well *informed* and properly *formed* to enable – empower - individuals to grow in discernment of the *appropriateness* of their own moral choices

*models for conscience in the tradition*

prescriptive: doing what one is told because it is demanded by appropriate authority

prudential: choosing what one discerns as the most appropriate option  
in a particular situation ... all things considered

prophetic: choosing the heroic option – ‘standing out in the crowd’

*relating to the commitment of the spouses to the marriage – sacramental – covenant*

by reflecting on

## **Personal** *Choice*

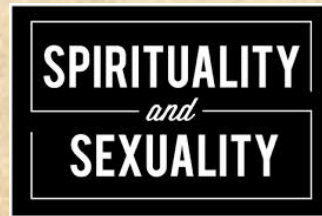
*the difference between (maintaining / keeping) law and morality*

- ... law relates to *what to do or avoid*
- ... law relates primarily to *fact / detail* .... (observance of) law is neither good nor bad
- ... law is 'doing the *right thing*' according to rule, regulation
- ... law is about conforming my action to what authority / the community expects
  
- ... morality relates to *the quality of person I am (trying to be)*  
*and the choices I therefore make*
- ... morality *relates to motivation*
- ... morality is about choosing the '*right*' option  
'the option' which is as true to who I am (trying to be) as a person as I can make it  
'the option' which helps me be as Christ-like as possible

I suspect that those who think morality is black and white  
...haven't put in a tax return recently!

*relating to the commitment of the spouses to the marriage – sacramental - covenant*

by reflecting on



and while this is, obviously, enormously important  
... it is better to

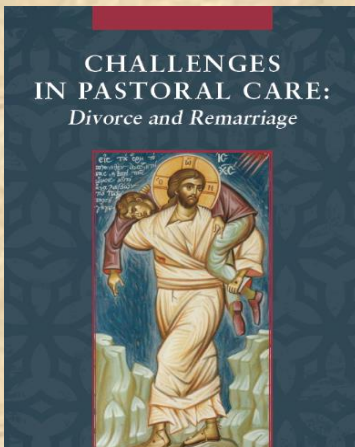
*Leave it to the experts.*



SYNOD OF BISHOPS  
PASTORAL CHALLENGES TO  
THE FAMILY IN THE CONTEXT  
OF EVANGELIZATION

where to from here?

especially where the concern relates to





## ***Pope Francis at the close of Synod 18 October 2014***

‘It has been a journey, and since it is a journey of human beings, with the consolations there were also moments of desolation, of tensions and temptations, of which a few possibilities could be mentioned:

### ***a temptation to hostile inflexibility,***

that is wanting to close oneself within the written word, (the letter) and not allowing oneself to be surprised by God, by the God of surprises, (the spirit); From the time of Christ, it is the temptation of the zealous, of the scrupulous, of the solicitous and of the so-called – today – “traditionalists” and also of the intellectuals.

### ***the temptation to a destructive tendency to goodness***

that in the name of a deceptive mercy binds the wounds without first curing them and treating them; that treats the symptoms and not the causes and the roots. It is the temptation of the ‘do-gooders,’ of the fearful, and also of the so-called ‘progressives and liberals.

### ***the temptation to transform stones into bread***

to break the long, heavy, and painful fast (cf. *Luke 4:1-4*); and also

### ***the temptation to transform the bread into a stone***

and cast it against the sinners, the weak, and the sick (cf *John 8:7*), that is, to transform it into unbearable burdens (*Luke 11:46*).



## ***Pope Francis at the close of Synod on 18 October 2014***

It has been a journey – and like every journey there were moments of running fast, as if wanting to conquer time and reach the goal as soon as possible; other moments of fatigue, as if wanting to say “enough”; other moments of enthusiasm and ardour.

There were moments of profound consolation listening to the testimony of true pastors, who wisely carry in their hearts the joys and the tears of their faithful people.

Moments of consolation and grace and comfort hearing the testimonies of the families who have participated in the Synod and have shared with us the beauty and the joy of their married life.

A journey where the stronger feel compelled to help the less strong, where the more experienced are led to serve others, even through confrontations.





## ***Pope Francis at the close of Synod on 18 October 2014***

### *the duty of the Pope*

is that of guaranteeing the unity of the Church

is that of reminding the faithful of their duty to faithfully follow the Gospel of Christ

is that of reminding the pastors that their first duty is to nourish the flock  
– to nourish the flock – that the Lord has entrusted to them,  
and to seek to welcome with fatherly care and mercy,  
and without false fears – the lost sheep

*... I made a mistake here. I said welcome: [rather] to go out and find them*

SYNOD OF BISHOPS  
PASTORAL CHALLENGES TO  
THE FAMILY IN THE CONTEXT  
OF EVANGELIZATION



## ***Pope Francis at the close of Synod on 18 October 2014***

Dear brothers and sisters,

now we still have one year to mature,  
with true spiritual discernment, the proposed ideas

and to find concrete solutions to so many difficulties and innumerable challenges that  
families must confront;

to give answers to the many discouragements that surround and suffocate families.

“We can learn so much from each other”

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