

A. MARRIAGE AS A NATURAL INSTITUTION

1. God instituted marriage as the beginning and basis of human society.

a. It was implicitly instituted in the creation of man and woman:

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.



2. Marriage is a life long covenant between a man and a woman, where by the man and woman (two persons), freely and mutually consent:
 - a. to intimately unite as one (a truly singular reality – the married couple)
 - b. to create an intimate bond of love
 - c. to form a family of persons,
 - d. to be mutual gifts of self to one another.

3. Marriage, as a natural institution, exists among the non-baptized.



B. THE TWOFOLD PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE

1. Marriage by its nature is ordered toward (the twofold end of marriage):
 - a. The good of the spouses [*unitive purpose*] [*Fidelity*]
 - 1) The spouses give themselves definitively and totally to one another.
 - 2) The spouses are obligated to preserve their covenant as unique and indissoluble.
 - b. The procreation and education of offspring [*procreative purpose*] [*Fecundity*]
 - 1) The fruit and fulfillment of the mutual giving of the spouse is a child.
 - 2) The Church teaches that "it is necessary that each and every marriage act remain ordered per se to the procreation of human life."
 - 3) Spouses share in the creative power of God.
 - 4) Transmission of life and education of children are a married couples proper mission.



2. These two meanings or values of marriage cannot be separated --
- without altering the couple's spiritual life and compromising the goods of marriage and the future of the family.
3. Marriage is lawful, good, and praiseworthy, as long as it is direct to the purpose for which God established the institution.



C. MARRIAGE AS A SACRAMENT

1. Marriage between baptized persons has been raised by Christ to the dignity of a sacrament.
 - a. Christ took the natural bond of marriage and made it a sacramental bond.
 - b. A sacramental bond is unbreakable
 - c. It is the sacramental bond that allows a marriage to succeed, to grow, to realize the true beauty and meaning of marriage.
 - d. The sacrament bond provides a channel for grace.
 - e. The success of the marriage depends on those graces.



2. As a sacrament marriage signifies and communicates grace.
3. Marriage is sign of the covenant of Christ and the Church.
4. A marriage without that help from the sacrament is doom to fail or at least limp along; it will never be what could or should be.
5. But even if the marriage is constituted as a sacrament and a sacramental bond is there, it is possible to block that grace because of sin.
 - a. A person entering marriage in the state of serious / mortal sin won't have available the graces;
 - b. the bond will be there, but the graces will not...



D. MATRIMONIAL CONSENT

1. It is the mutual exchange of consent that establishes the “conjugal” bond – it makes the marriage.
 - a. If consent is lacking there is no marriage.
2. The consent must be an act of the will of each of the contracting parties, free of coercion or grave external fear.
 - a. If this freedom is lacking the marriage is invalid.
3. An invalid marriage can be annulled, i.e., that the marriage never existed.
4. The priest (or deacon) who assists at the celebration of a marriage receives the consent of the spouses in the name of the Church and gives the blessing of the Church.



E. MIXED MARRIAGES AND DISPARITY OF CULT

1. Mixed marriage: a marriage between a Catholic and baptized non-Catholic
 - a. Requires the express permission of ecclesiastical authority.
2. Disparity of cult: a marriage between a Catholic and a non-baptized person.
 - a. Requires a dispensation
3. This permission or dispensation presupposes:
 - a. that both parties know and do not exclude the essential; and
 - b. that the Catholic party confirms the obligations of
 - 1) preserving his or her own faith and
 - 2) ensuring the baptism and education of the children in the Catholic Church

F. THE EFFECTS OF THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

1. A sacramental bond is created between the spouses which by its very nature is perpetual and exclusive:
 - a. A marriage concluded and consummated between baptized persons can never be dissolved.
2. The grace received from the sacrament of Marriage:
 - a. Perfects the couple's love and strengthens their indissoluble unity,
 - b. Helps the couple to attain holiness in their married life, and
 - c. Helps them in welcoming and educating their children.

G. OFFENSES AGAINST THE DIGNITY OF MARRIAGE

1. Adultery...
2. Divorce...
3. Free unions (rejection of marriage)
 - a. A man and a woman refuse to give juridical and public form to a liaison involving sexual intimacy.
 - b. These situations offend against the dignity of marriage;
 - 1) They destroy the very idea of the family;
 - 2) They weaken the sense of fidelity.
 - 3) They are contrary to the moral law.
 - c. The sexual act must take place exclusively within marriage.
 - d. Outside of marriage it always constitutes a grave sin and excludes one from sacramental communion.
4. Trial marriages
 - a. Such liaisons can scarcely ensure mutual sincerity and fidelity in a relationship between a man and a woman, nor, especially, can they protect it from inconstancy of desires or whim.
 - b. Human love does not tolerate "trial marriages." It demands a total and definitive gift of persons to one another.