

Annulments

One of the challenges for some people entering into the RCIA process is the need to look at our lives and address those decisions we've made in our past that we were not able to fully commit to. One of those decisions may have been the decision to enter into a marriage that did not work out and then to enter into another marriage. This is a sensitive topic, and a brief write-up on a web page will not convey the depth of sensitivity the Catholic Church has about marriage and the annulment process, so please contact Catherine Sims for more information about this process as it relates to you.

To oversimplify what the church believes about the need for annulments, an understanding of the church's teachings about marriage is necessary. God has revealed to us through the Scriptures that marriage is held in such high regard that it sees it as a symbol of the love of God for His people. God's love is never-ending, and the resultant covenant that He makes with His people is also never-ending. It is upon that model that the Church reveres marriage as one of its sacraments.

Genesis 2:22-24 So the LORD God cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. The LORD God then built up into a woman the rib that he had taken from the man. When he brought her to the man, the man said: "This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; This one shall be called 'woman,' for out of 'her man' this one has been taken." That is why a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two of them become one body.

1 Corinthians 7:10-11 To the married, however, I give this instruction (not I, but the Lord): a wife should not separate from her husband--and if she does separate she must either remain single or become reconciled to her husband--and a husband should not divorce his wife.

Unfortunately, sometimes we are not able to commit to each other in the same way that God commits to us, His Church, even if that commitment is to someone we are deeply in love with. See, it is only through the grace of God, provided in the Sacrament of Matrimony, that we humans can be sustained in our commitment to live with another in love in the same way God commits to live with us in love. And as a result, the marriages that we entered into can come to an end. The annulment process seeks to state that the conditions necessary for a valid sacramental marriage between these two people were not present. The annulment process has no effect on the legitimacy of children; the children remain legitimate due to the civil marriage that existed. The annulment process is available for the baptized (Catholic and those who wish to marry a Catholic or become Catholic).

For more information on the Catholic Church's perspective on marriage, contact Catherine Sims at csims@stjoseph-libertyville.org or 847-990-1238.