

DIVORCED AND FAITHFUL: ALL IS RESTORED IN CHRIST

The Church journeys with each person through moments of heartbreaking sadness such as divorce offering a message of hope, love and mercy that is found in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

DIVORCED AND FAITHFUL: ALL IS RESTORED IN CHRIST: SCRIPT

"I know well what they are suffering." (Exodus 3:7)

When you are suffering from the loss of a divorce, God knows you are hurting.

In a similar way, the Church journeys with each person through moments of heartbreaking sadness such as divorce offering a message of hope, love and mercy that is found in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

This is the Catholic Church's mission - bringing forth God's salvific plan. The Church is called to *"proclaim and to spread among all peoples the Kingdom of Christ and of God and to be, on earth, the initial budding forth of that kingdom."* (Lumen Gentium)

Through the Sacraments, we grow closer to our Lord Jesus Christ, grow in holiness and build the Kingdom of God on earth. Marriage is one of the Church's seven Sacraments.

"So they are not longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." (Matthew 19:6)

Catholics believe that marriage comes as a gift from the hand of God. The Catholic vision of marriage is rooted in Sacred Scripture and is expressed in the teachings and practices of the Church.

Even when a marriage ends in divorce, the Church encourages the individuals affected to participate in their faith.

"We [the US Bishops] understand the pain of those for whom divorce seemed the only recourse. We urge them to make frequent use of the sacraments, especially the Sacraments of Holy Eucharist and Reconciliation." (USCCB pastoral letter, Marriage: Love and Life in the Divine Plan, 2009)

When a marriage ends, the Catholic Church offers the annulment process so that individuals can reflect on what went wrong. The Church also seeks to determine the couple's level of understanding at the time of their marriage. Did the couple understand the sacramental nature of their sacred bond at the time of their marriage or did other factors affect the validity of the Sacrament?

These are important areas that are explored as part of the annulment process. It's a process that is designed to bring a sense of closure as well as peace and forgiveness. The process is a time of profound healing. The Church opens her arms to receive those struggling with their divorce, to walk with them and encourage them to lead holy lives.

"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

People who have gone through an annulment have found peace and insight into themselves and their marriages. The Church invites you to find healing, forgiveness, and new joy.