

Lesson 20: Marriage

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wEhi7cM8IM&list=PLKsOUfYtz1JU-jXLBXoSJzxZcrQmyJtDw&index=6>

Marriage, also known as matrimony, is a sacrament in the Catholic Church; it is the union of one male to one female in order to come closer to God and is the appropriate venue in which to bear children. Marriage is a sacred covenant between each spouse with each other and with God. It is a Sacrament of Healing.

A sacrament is an outward expression of inward grace. Sacramentally speaking, each spouse in the marriage acts as a conduit of God's grace to the other spouse, hence the reason it is a sacrament. Christ is the source of this grace and the spouses serve as Christ to each other.

In order for the marriage to be considered a sacramental marriage, it must meet the following conditions:

- Each person must be baptized.
- Each person is entering into the marriage upon their own free will; neither person could be forced into marriage.

Each person must not be impeded by any natural or ecclesiastical law - such as a previous marriage or religious vows or a close blood relationship between the couple (a brother and sister or first cousins)

In a marriage ceremony, it is not the priest who marries the couple, but rather it is the man and woman who marry each other. The two joining in matrimony are the ones conferring the sacrament upon each other and not through the priest or deacon.

Children are often considered fruit of a marriage, but the ability to bear children is not a prerequisite to marriage. A married couple is not required to have children, but the Church teaches that if there is no reason not to have children that married couples should have children. Having children allows us to participate as co-creators with God and is one of the greatest gifts given by God.

Contrary to popular misconceptions, an annulment decree does not cost any money, and it does not mean that any children produced by the union are illegitimate. For Catholics who have divorced (and perhaps remarried), the annulment process — which starts with a visit to a parish priest — is an important way to regularize their status with the Church and can even be therapeutic in putting the broken relationship behind.