

## The Vatican's Meddling in Marriages

Marriage is a creation ordinance, belonging to all mankind. As sovereign Lord over His creation, God instituted that male and female should at a proper time leave mother and father and be married, “*therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*”<sup>1</sup> From the beginning both believers<sup>2</sup> and non-believers<sup>3</sup> married because the ordinance of marriage is for all mankind. Mankind cannot put an end to this creation command. God has used families, clans, tribes, and governments as instruments to facilitate, enforce and watch over the bonds of marriage. But because of fallen man's sinful nature, these institutions in varying degrees have not followed the command of permanent monogamy as the divine law of marriage. Even some of God's people have followed the corrupted norms of societies rather than the law of God. When governments allow marriage to fall into disrepute, God's judgment is on these institutions and their societies.<sup>4</sup> The Lord Jesus Christ reinforced the creation command and explained how it was God's will for His people, “*what therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*”<sup>5</sup> Those who are in Christ Jesus should, as a light to a fallen world<sup>6</sup>, reflect their union with their Lord in their marriages. The true people of God should be the preeminent instrument that God uses to uphold marriage because they have the revelation of Scripture and the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible does not prescribe anything in respect to the mode of performing the marriage ceremony. Ceremonies differ in various nations but should never be regarded as anything more than a public recognition of a relationship entered into by a man and woman before God their creator. Yet, as marriage is a matter of important consequence involving public as well as private obligations, it is appropriate and necessary that some ceremony should be performed, and that it should be public so as to leave no doubt as to its reality.

### **Alleged absolute power over marriage**

Defining marriage for its own purposes, breaking in pieces some vows of marriage, while putting together stipulations never intended by the Creator is all part and parcel of the Papacy's meddling in marriages. While the Catholic Church gives lip service to marriage as fashioned by God in its basic meaning and structure, in its law and practice it is totally different. The Catholic Church claims to have absolute authority over marriage and therefore exercises total legislation over marriage, even its validity and unmaking. For example, Pope Leo XIII tried to vindicate the Catholic Church's usurped authority over the institution of marriage when he declared, “When Christ, therefore, renewed matrimony and raised it to such a great [i.e., sacramental] excellence, He gave and confided to the Church, the entire legislation in the matter.”<sup>7</sup> In Rome's *Code of Canon Law* she states, “Marriage cases of the baptized belong to the ecclesiastical judge by the

---

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 2:24

<sup>2</sup> For example, see Genesis 5.

<sup>3</sup> For example see Genesis 4:16- 17

<sup>4</sup> “*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness.*” (Romans 1:18) The word “ungodliness” includes all crimes against God and all crimes against fellow men in marriage or otherwise.

<sup>5</sup> Matthew 19:6

<sup>6</sup> “*Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*” Ephesians 5:24, 32

proper right.”<sup>8</sup> She is quite definite in giving the basis for her wholesale claim that marriage belongs to her.

The Roman Catholic laws on marriages are a shock to anyone who knows the nature of marriage as coming from the Creator Himself. In Scripture it is declared to be respectable in all its components, “*Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled.*”<sup>9</sup> This is God’s ordinance and not that of any church. It ought to be so esteemed by all and not denied to any of those for whom God has made it. It is honorable because God instituted it for man from the beginning and has called it so. He married and blessed the first couple, the first parents of mankind, to direct all to look to God in this great institution. This is so abundantly clear that one would think that all humankind would be in agreement. But the Church of Rome does not agree. All of the secular features of marriage expressed above are strongly opposed by the Roman Catholic Church. This first happened in the twelfth century when Papal Rome gained control over marriage and began legislating on the validity or invalidity of all marriages, whether kings or peasants.<sup>10</sup> This takeover of marriage by Rome in her drive for power is one of the most influential tools that she has in her control of Catholics worldwide. In her 1983 *Code of Canon Law*, the Vatican moved to consolidate her power over marriage. For example, the Vatican sets the age that a person may enter marriage when it legislates that “a man before he has completed his sixteenth year of age and a woman before she has completed her fourteenth year of age cannot enter into a valid marriage.”<sup>11</sup> Further, according to Catholic law, the marriage of a Catholic with an unbaptized person is legally invalid, “A marriage between two persons, one of whom has been baptized in the Catholic Church or received into it and has not defected from it by a formal act and the other of whom is not baptized, is invalid.”<sup>12</sup>

The same Vatican also legislates that sexual impotence on the part of a man and wife make a marriage legally invalid. “Antecedent and perpetual impotence to have intercourse, whether on the part of the man or the woman, whether absolute or relative, nullifies marriage by its very nature.”<sup>13</sup> The Pope further reserves the right to dissolve a non-consummated marriage, even if a person is unwilling. Thus the Vatican in Canon 1142 legislates, “For a just cause, the

---

<sup>7</sup> *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, Neuner, J., and Dupuis, J., eds. (Cork: The Mercier Press 1967), Para. 1821

<sup>8</sup> *Code of Canon Law*, Latin-English Edition (Canon Law Society of America, 1983, 1999) Canon.1671. All canons taken from this volume unless otherwise stated.

<sup>9</sup> Hebrews 13:4

<sup>10</sup> For most of its history from the sixth century to the time of the Reformation, the Catholic Church controlled religion, morals, politics, art and education in what was known as the Holy Roman Empire. In those centuries of the Dark Ages, it was the priest and bishop who governed peoples’ lives in regards to morality and therefore, marriage. It was not until the Reformation that the institution of marriage achieved any freedom from Roman ecclesiastical control. In 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, some governments established an independent civil institution of marriage for all people on an equal basis. There were, of course, Christian groups independent of the Catholic Church throughout all of the Christian era, as, for example, the Vaudois, the Waldenses, and others, who had their own churches and pastors. From its beginning, the United States as a nation built its governmental structures upon the Reformation understanding of separation of religious and civil jurisdictions. Because of this biblical understanding, the United States was free from Catholic dominion from the very beginning. However, the general state of affairs in Europe for most of its history was that the Catholic law was the moral law.

<sup>11</sup> Canon 1083, §1.

<sup>12</sup> Canon 1086 §1

<sup>13</sup> Canon 1084 §1

Roman Pontiff can dissolve a non-consummated marriage between baptized persons or between a baptized party and a non-baptized party at the request of both parties or of one of them, even if the other party is unwilling.” While public recognition of a relationship is essential to marriage, the Vatican in Canon 1130 legislates even for secret marriages, “For a grave and urgent cause, the local ordinary [the bishop] can permit a marriage to be celebrated secretly.” This “secret marriage” is so covert and surreptitious that the Vatican solemnly declares, “A marriage celebrated secretly is to be noted only in a special register to be kept in the secret archive of the curia.”<sup>14</sup> This is only a small portion of the more than one hundred ten laws that the cardinals and bishops of the Church of Rome legislate for Catholic people around the world.<sup>15</sup>

### **Mixed marriages**

The Vatican’s control over marriages and the marriage bed becomes especially manipulative in what they call “mixed marriages”. Mixed marriages have been and continue to be one of the more successful ways of increasing the numbers of those who submit to Catholic ways. All priests involved in pastoral work are obliged to uphold these Catholic laws. No marriage between a baptized Bible believer and a Catholic is permitted without written resolution that all children born of the union will be brought up in the Catholic Church. This is the Catholic law. Canon 1124 states, “Without express permission of the competent authority, a marriage is prohibited between two baptized persons of whom one is baptized in the Catholic Church or received into it after baptism...” The clinching law is Canon 1125,

“The local ordinary, that is the bishop, can grant permission of this kind if there is a just and reasonable cause. He is not to grant it unless the following conditions have been fulfilled. 1. The Catholic party is to declare that he or she is prepared to remove dangers of defecting from the faith and to make a sincere promise to do all in his or her power so that all offspring are baptized and brought up in the Catholic Church. 2. The other party is to be informed at an appropriate time about the promises which the Catholic party is to make in such a way that it is certain that he or she is truly aware of the promise and obligation of the Catholic party.”

Thus a “dispensation” (the removal of the impediment imposed by Canon 1124) is given by a formal action of bishop according to the stipulations of Canon 1125. Rome makes laws so that in removing them by her decrees of permission with conditions, she gains control over lives and families.

When Rome first set about winning Protestants to Catholicism in United States of America, one strategy of its documented plan was to entice them by mixed marriages. In 1810, Roman Catholic Bishop Brute sent a report to be sent back to Rome highlighting “mixed marriages” as one of the ways of bringing Protestants into the Church of Rome.<sup>16</sup> Regrettably these tactics are still successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Divorce**

Biblically, when it comes to divorce, there are four main statements by the Lord Jesus Christ. Two of these reflect total opposition to divorce whereas two others indicate acceptance of divorce on the grounds of sexual unfaithfulness, and the right of remarriage for the innocent party.

---

<sup>14</sup> Canon 1133

<sup>15</sup> So comprehensive are these laws that they are organized into chapters. See Canons 1055 - 1165.

<sup>16</sup> *Documentary Reports on Early American Catholicism*, Selected and Introduced by Philip Gleason (New York: Arno Press, 1978) p. 229

The fundamental divine law of marriage is that a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife. The nature of the marriage contract is that the two persons joined in such a union become one flesh, “*therefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*”<sup>17</sup> Husband and wife, being joined together by the ordinance of God, are not to be put asunder by any decree of man. God says that He hates divorce.<sup>18</sup> God’s perfect will is the safeguarding of societal order by the preservation of marriages. There are only two grounds for divorce and remarriage. When either sexual infidelity<sup>19</sup> or desertion of a believer by an unbelieving spouse<sup>20</sup> has taken place, a divorce can be obtained. In such cases, the marriage relationship has already been severed and divorce is a formal acknowledgment of what has already taken place.

### **Divorce—Catholic annulment style**

The Catholic Church declares that all marriages between baptized people are in fact a sacrament. This is conditioned into the minds of Catholics from childhood. It is reiterated in canon law, “... a valid matrimonial contract cannot exist between the baptized without it being by that fact a Sacrament.”<sup>21</sup> The Catholic Church teaches that sacraments are means of grace. (It is inconsistent, therefore that, within Papal teaching, such a means of grace as the sacrament of marriage would, by another Catholic law, be unavailable to those in the priesthood.) In declaring marriage to be a sacrament, the Catholic Church means that it is a sacrament by which God gives grace and over which she has control. On this basis Rome sets up a hierarchy of marriages whereby the Catholic marriage as a sacrament takes precedence over other marriages. Thus in the law of papal Rome, marriages that are civilly valid before God can be considered null and void from the point of view of Catholic law. A marriage of a Catholic to a non-Catholic that did not take place before a Catholic priest is considered null and void, and it is only a matter of time before the parties can be released from their marriage vows. It is by making laws and then retaining the power to remove them through her decrees that papal Rome gains domination over lives and families.

The Catholic Church continually enunciates that there is no divorce for a marriage that is lawfully performed between a consenting, baptized man and woman. However, study of the Roman laws regarding an annulment shows that great technical skill and ingenuity is used in dispensing papal annulments. An annulment in actual fact amounts to exactly the same thing as a divorce in practice. In law it goes beyond the concept of a divorce. The Catholic Church, in granting an annulment, declares legally that a marriage never was. This means that one can end up in the absurd situation of having been legitimately married and having had children from that marriage—a tangible fact of the marriage—and yet the marriage is declared to never have been!

---

<sup>17</sup> Matthew 19:6

<sup>18</sup> Malachi 2:16

<sup>19</sup> Matthew 19:9 “*Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.*”

<sup>20</sup> I Corinthians 7:12-15 “*If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.*”

<sup>21</sup> Canon 1055, §2

Further, without an annulment, civil divorce is not recognized by the Catholic Church as valid. This in turn keeps Catholics from taking the Eucharist, which, after baptism, is the central means of obtaining ongoing grace that purportedly flows through the sacrament. This in turn has extreme consequences when Catholics think of dying without the necessary sacramental grace in which they have been taught to believe.

### **Dispensing Annulments**

One of the chief implements used in gaining an annulment is what is called a “diriment impediment”. A “diriment impediment” is an obstacle that is so detrimental as to nullify a marriage automatically. An example would be a lack of consent of either party or a deficiency in the actual procedure of the ceremony, which is called “the form of marriage”. The required “form of marriage” according to Rome is that a marriage is performed before a priest and two witnesses. This is another example of making laws and then removing them so as to maintain control over lives and families. Many marriages are declared null because of the laws of the Catholic Church regarding “diriment impediments”. An example of this is a “radical sanation.” A “radical sanation” is a decree that is retroactive and that can stabilize and validate a marriage, which began as an invalid marriage. Thus present day canon law states,

“The radical sanation of an invalid marriage is its convalidation without the renewal of consent, which is granted by the competent authority and entails the dispensation from an impediment, if there is one, and from canonical form, if it was not observed, and the retroactivity of canonical effects.”<sup>22</sup>

This “radical sanation” sounds very much like the “open sesame” of *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*. At the command of Ali Baba the cave was opened by the magical words. So also the intricate command structure of the Vatican is purportedly able to **retroactively** validate a marriage that had been null and void. The same canon continues, “Convalidation occurs at the moment of the granting of the favor. Retroactivity, however, is understood to extend to the moment of the celebration of the marriage unless other provision is expressly made.”<sup>23</sup> Such making and unmaking of marriages contravenes Divine law of marriage in Scripture. Marriage is an ordinance for the preservation of mankind. It was God Himself who said, “*therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh,*” laying down the law for all Adam’s posterity. God’s law cannot be manipulated and stage-managed by the decrees of any system. Nonetheless to do so is attempted with amazing shrewdness by the same papal Rome that outlaws marriage for her priests.

### **Vatican making and unmaking of marriage**

The making and the unmaking of marriage is claimed to be all within the apostolic power of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church exercises such power even if both parties know nothing of what is being done. Thus Rome proclaims in her law, “A sanation can be granted validly even when one or both of the parties are unaware of it; but it is not to be granted except for serious reason.”<sup>24</sup> This mysterious power to command a healing to a marriage that never existed is purportedly held in the heart of Rome herself, “The Apostolic See can grant a radical sanation.”<sup>25</sup> Marriage is not made valid at the command of Rome; in Scripture marriage is regulated according to the will and counsel of God. The Lord Christ Jesus said “*a man leave father and mother,*

---

<sup>22</sup> Canon 1161

<sup>23</sup> Canon 1161, Para. 2

<sup>24</sup> Canon 1164

<sup>25</sup> Canon 1165

*and shall cleave to his wife.*”<sup>26</sup> This alone is how a marriage becomes valid before God. To decree that celibate prelates in Rome, even though the parties themselves do not know of it, can make a marriage is pharisaic totalitarianism gone wild! This bizarre power is claimed because Rome claims that marriage is a sacrament. It is therefore within her power to make or break marriages according to her own will and purposes.

The unmaking of marriages is sometimes done by what is called “interior consent”, the consent that either the man or woman had or did not have from the beginning. On different ecclesiastical investigations, this can come out in an ecclesiastical court, either to make or to break a marriage. Catholic annulments are a big business inside the Catholic Church, and in the United States it is known for the down-to-earth facility that is given for the procuring of annulments.

“The statistics are interesting. In 1968 there were in the US a total of 338 annulments. In 1992 there were no less than 59,030, that is one hundred and seventy-five times as many. Another interesting figure is that the total number of annulments in the Catholic Church world wide in 1992 was 76,286, which means that no less than 75% of all annulments were from the US, that is from a little over 5% of the world’s Catholic population. Moreover, not only do one in two Catholic marriages here in the States end up with a divorce, but one in five is officially annulled, 90% of the demands for annulment being successful.”<sup>27</sup>

“During 1984 and 1986-1994, U.S. Second Instance tribunals ratified 342,218 ordinary process decrees of nullity, retried and ruled for nullity in 13,303, and decided against nullity in 1,412. Second Instance tribunals in the rest of the world, despite adjudicating 250,000 fewer cases, ruled against nullity in 5,890 cases. Putting this another way, an American ordinary process annulment had four chances in a thousand of being overturned at Second Instance, as opposed to 56 chances in a thousand for ordinary process annulments granted elsewhere.”<sup>28</sup>

The casual and arrogant manner of dealing with marriage and the dissolution of marriage is not surprising, given the bishops and priests who make papal judgments on marriages. In contrast a pastor in Scripture is to be “*one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?*” Even these qualifications exclude the celibate judges who grant annulments. Like Indulgences, the whole annulment industry of the Roman Catholic Church—from the propounding of the laws to the sale of the contraband article—is in total violation of Scripture.

### **Marriage and the Catholic travesty against it**

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, clearly spoke of the dignity and sanctity of marriage. When questioned about marriage, He went back to the narrative in Genesis, “*Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.’?*”<sup>29</sup> Christ Jesus’ endorsement of the sanctity of marriage was simply a re-endorsement of the original revelation given by God. Marriage is a creation ordinance. It is

<sup>26</sup> Matthew 19:5

<sup>27</sup> [http://www.ssp.org/Canonical\\_Commission/august\\_1995\\_itr.htm](http://www.ssp.org/Canonical_Commission/august_1995_itr.htm) 5/30/05

<sup>28</sup> [www.familylifecenter.net/txt/annulments-in-america.html](http://www.familylifecenter.net/txt/annulments-in-america.html) 5/30/05

<sup>29</sup> Matthew 19:4-5

not like baptism and the Lord's Supper, which are ordinances of the New Testament directly from Christ Himself and for believers only. Marriage is from the beginning and it comes under the jurisdiction of the civil state as instituted by God. For Christians, the laws regarding marriage are clearly laid out in the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments. A Christian pastor can counsel a couple regarding their marriage according to these biblical norms. He is never to take jurisdiction over their marriage to make or break it. The Lord Jesus Christ is abundantly clear when He states that what God has joined together, no man should put asunder. The only biblical grounds for divorce are what the Lord Himself allows in the case of sexual unfaithfulness and what the Apostle Paul allows in the case of desertion of a believer by an unbelieving spouse.

Nevertheless, the Catholic Church has manufactured a whole set of rules and regulations that requires a Roman Catholic canon lawyer to fully understand. Since cases of the validity of marriage abound with many different technical terms, Rome says she upholds the sanctity of marriage, but she allows marriages to be declared null and void based upon a terminology of her own making. For example, "nullity" (the decree that a marriage is null and void) when granted by Rome's ecclesial courts is not just a simple statement. It allows for different interpretations. Thus Canon 1684 states,

"After the sentence which first declared the nullity of the marriage has been confirmed at the appellate grade either by a decree or by a second sentence, the persons whose marriage has been declared null can contract a new marriage as soon as the decree or second sentence has been communicated to them unless a prohibition attached to the sentence or decree or established by the local ordinary [the bishop] has forbidden this."

Thus the very decree that a marriage is null and void is muddied by Catholic terminology that requires trained Catholic lawyers to lead one through the labyrinth of canon law. Papal Rome has granted hundreds of thousands of annulments and allowed remarriage. Many of such unions, called marriages, are in fact, before the Lord and His Word, nothing more than officially blessed whoredoms. Such sinful unions take away the hearts and souls of men and women. These are living situations, blessed by the priest and the Church of Rome, but they are like a deep ditch and a narrow pit, out of which it is almost impossible to escape.

## **Conclusion**

The extravagant demands of Roman Catholic law impinge on the freedom of any nation. If Christian people are truly informed, they must become aware that marriage, the very basis of society, is being controlled and manipulated for millions of Catholics. It applies to not only the millions of Catholics in the United States, in different Western nations, and across the world, but it also applies to the millions of Christians and others who are also deeply ensnared by canon law as they enter into marriage with Catholics. Vatican canon law on marriage involves also millions of people across the globe in the nations where the Vatican is accepted as a civil power, and especially in those nations the Vatican has legally entered into a "concordat". If Catholicism is to be addressed seriously, this violation of marriage must be dealt with scripturally, as it stands at the very heart and structure of civil society as given by God.

There is no way to maintain a biblical and evangelical testimony for the Gospel of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone while granting legitimacy to Roman Catholic laws on mar-

riage. It is impossible to hold that one is a Bible-believing Evangelical Christian who accepts both the inspiration and authority of the Bible and still give legality to Roman Catholicism, which forthrightly rejects that principle, as their laws on marriage show. Such behavior is an affront to Christ in His work of redemption and likewise to the Holy Spirit in His ministry of convincing the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Romans 1:18 clearly states that *“the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.”* Who can bear the devouring fire of God’s everlasting wrath? The good news is that personal faith and salvation are also from His hand, *“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.”*<sup>30</sup> Christ Jesus has power to pardon the greatest lawbreaker and the greatest religious fanatic, as He is exalted for this very purpose. No sinner need fear Him who is ‘*a Prince and a Savior*’ at the right hand of God. To Him we may come with confidence. When pressed with the consciousness sin, and when we recognize that we deserve eternal death, we may confidently look to His power and grace. The Scripture proclaims, *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”* The Lord Himself declared, *“He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.”* The Lord will always be merciful to those who turn to Him in faith for the remission of sins. *“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”* Compare the oppressive and expensive laws of the Vatican with the requirements of Christ Jesus the Lord, and see how true it is that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. Jesus Christ will give assured rest all weary souls that come to Him. Rest from the terror of sin, rest from the power of sin, and most of all, rest in the Lord God. This is that rest which remains for the people of God. It begins in grace, and will one day be perfected in glory, thus the Scripture declares, *“Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.”*<sup>31</sup> ♦

Richard Bennett of “Berean Beacon” WebPage: <http://www.bereanbeacon.org>

Permission is given by the author to copy this article if it is done in its entirety without any changes.

Permission is also given post this article in its entirety on Internet WebPages.

---

<sup>30</sup> Acts 5:31.

<sup>31</sup> Revelation 19:9